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Holmes, George, fl. 1797.
Sketches of some of the
southern counties ...

SKETCHES

OF

SOME OF THE

SOUTHERN COUNTIES

OF

IRELAND,

COLLECTED

DURING A TOUR IN THE AUTUMN, 1797.

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY G. HOLMES.

" Nor is the Mead unworthy of thy Foot,
" Full of fresh Verdure, and unnumber'd Flowers
" The negligence of Nature, wide, and wild;
" Where, undisguis'd by mimic Art, she spreads
" Unbounded Beauty to the roving Eye."

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

LONDON:

Printed by J. D. Dewick, Aldersgate Street,

FOR LONGMAN AND REES; J. CUTHELL; AND VERNOR AND HOOD; AND SOLD BY J. ARCHER, DUBLIN.

1801.

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TO

HER GRACE

THE

DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

MADAM,

A STRANGER to England, but not so to the refined taste for polite literature, and unbounded patronage of the fine arts, so eminently conspicuous in your Grace: permit me, Madam, to offer to your favourable notice the following hasty sketches, originating from objects but imperfectly known to this country; and by the present crisis, rendered particularly interesting. The intention with which they are published will, I trust, in some degree, extenuate their faults; and

and if they should be so fortunate as to obtain your Grace's approbation and protection, I shall enjoy a satisfaction equally pleasurable, as it will be honourable.

Madam, impressed with the most profound respect, I remain, your Grace's

Most devoted,

Obedient humble Servant,

GEORGE HOLMES.

TO THE READER.

AT this period of universal information, while the historic and descriptive pages of the most distant climes are unfolded to our view, are we not naturally to suppose those parts nearest the heart of the empire, through which a great portion of its life-blood flows, should be intimately known? yet, strange to say, Ireland, which, for a space of six hundred years and more, has been politically connected with, and continues to be a powerful and valuable gem in the crown of Great Britain, is less known to the people of England, in general, than the most remote regions. On the contrary, the inhabitants of Ireland, for the most part, are acquainted with the topography and history of England; indeed, frequently more so than with their native country. On the eve of a legislative union between the two countries, it must, to an Englishman,

lishman, become an interesting object of enquiry. The picturesque scenery of England, Wales, and Scotland, have been ably described by many; but that of Ireland—never. A country particularly dignified by the magnificent hand of Nature, whose liberality has denied it nothing that is necessary to constitute a great and happy nation.

Cambrensis, who came into Ireland along with the first English-adventurers, and infected, with all the prejudices of the times; yet admits "that nature has looked with a more favourable eye, than usual, upon this kingdom of the Zephyrs."

Urged by the desire of seeing objects, which, in the circle of his society he had frequently heard described, and of making drawings from the numerous remains of antiquity, which are to be met with throughout the country. The author, during the autumn which preceded the late unhappy and blood-stained events, passed through some of the southern counties,

counties, which gave rise to the following letters, not then with any view for publication; nor should they now dare meet the public eye, but for the sincere and laudable wish for awakening curiosity in others, and perhaps inducing a capable hand to undertake the description of a country, abounding with the most sublime scenery. These considerations alone impelled him to offer to the public this feeble attempt, supported by the hope that the intention of the work may possibly palliate its numerous defects, and avert the just judgment of the discerning critic. He does not plead that weak and frivolous excuse—haste—no; he confesses his inability, and only trusts that it may not be called arrogance.

SKETCHES

OF

SOME OF THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES

OF

IRELAND.

Cashel, Aug. 11, 1797.

DEAR SIR,

THE evening which parted us produced a conversation which I do not forget. You then expressed a wish that my pencil would not be exercised to the exclusion of my pen; and, that along with those objects of the painters' pursuits (picturesque scenery) I would commit to paper such general remarks as might naturally arise from them, and other objects. I am well aware, my dear friend, of the qualifications necessary for such an undertaking; the knowledge of which leads me to a consciousness of

my own insufficiency; yet, as you have laid an injunction, and I have passed my promise, I must respect it. My letters will probably contain variety of matter, arising from the changeful face of nature, and local circumstances, in which, I trust, they will not be found altogether uninteresting: besides, you will, in a considerable degree, enjoy one of the greatest pleasures which the traveller himself experiences, that of anticipation, which is his staff, and he naturally leans on it for support: it bears him on over many a solitary hill, and, by its all consoling help, keeps curiosity alive, and softens his fatigue. I have heard it held to be more pleasurable even than retrospection; insomuch as ideal pleasures exceed those of reality. To some, perhaps, it may be so; but, on the contrary, the painter, whose art enables him to call from Nature's boundless store her choicest beauties, and make them all his own; while, from the blank, a living landscape grows upon the eye, which,

when

when finished, and he finds his new creation good, then must his reflections be equal to his anticipations; perhaps greater. Thus far a knowledge of painting in the tourist gives to him an evident advantage over the observer who is unacquainted with the executive part of the art; the want of which must preclude him from a thousand local pleasures, enjoyed by the painter in a very eminent degree.

Having previously debated on the route to be taken, and sketching out a rough draught, yet not binding ourselves to any specific line, I left Kilkenny this morning, in company with my friends, J. H. and W. S. You are acquainted with the excellent taste of the former for landscape painting, which, as an amateur, I have seldom seen excelled; and I believe are not ignorant of the latter's qualifications as a pleasant companion on such an excursion. Six miles from town stands the village of Kills, now very inconsiderable: on the left, its ruined priory rising

from the banks of the King's River, extends its walls along the stream, and ascending a beautifully swelling green bank, encompasses the church with its courts and towers. The first view of this mass of ruins gives more the idea of a vast baronial dwelling, than the peaceful habitation of the cloistered monk. Passing round the village, we entered a spacious area or court, surrounded by a formidable embattled wall, defended by lofty towers, called the burgher's court; this is separated from the inner court by another wall of still greater strength, on which are two stupendous square towers: adjoining the left one, is an arch, or gate, through which we entered the minor area, where stands the church, and several detached buildings; the whole built in a massive fine style. This place was capable of sustaining a vigorous siege in its earlier days, but since the introduction of gunpowder would be untenable, from its being commanded by eminences on three sides.

This

This Priory was founded by Geoffry Fitz Robert, in the reign of Richard I. and dedicated to St. Mary. In it were placed four Augustine canons, taken from the abbey of Bodmin, in Cornwall*. The east window is down, and so mutilated, that it is impossible to judge of its design: indeed, few or none of the ornaments of this great building remain; but from the magnificent scale of the whole, we may naturally conclude, that rich internal decorations were not wanting.

Near the church are several low mounds, or tumuli, one of which was opened some years ago; there were found in it an earthen vessel,

* Reynold de Ackland, first prior of the house; Hugh Rufus, successor to Reynold, and afterward bishop of Ossory; Alured afterward first prior of Innisteague; and Algar, who, having been sent to Rome on affairs of the abbey, had a bishoprick bestowed on him in Lombardy.

SIR J. WARE'S ANTIQ.

with some spear and arrow heads*. I counted twelve towers, very perfect; in one of which, while we were employed in examining an antique apartment, whose ponderous chimney-piece, and other ancient fixtures, caught our attention, and gave rise to a long train of the wildest speculation. As we approached a small low door, within which all was darkness, we were roused from our reveries by a strange indistinct sound. Presently we were encountered

* The ancient Irish burned their dead, and deposited the ashes in urns, of which many have been found, containing bones, ashes, and a jelly-like consistence, which was probably flesh. At Killimeille, near Dungannon, on the top of a hill, were two circles of stones joining each other, forming a figure of eight, each about twenty yards in diameter, being repositories for urns.

The person who farmed the ground, wanting stones to build a house, drew the most of them away. Within one of the circles were found three urns, in three several holes, covered with flat stones; around them were set six large stones, and others thrown upon the top. On the same hill, eastward

tered by a tall, emaciated figure, which, stooping through the low arched door, quickly passed us, and descended the spiral steps by which we came up. He had on a long coat reaching down past his knees, and on his head a kind of cap. From the glimpse we got of his face, it appeared pale and ghastly. You may easily form an idea of the effect produced by such an adventure, on our minds, which, from the surrounding objects, were prepared to receive the most romantic impressions. From

eastward of these circles, was discovered the altar on which they used to burn their dead, overgrown with green sod and earth. On uncovering it, it was found to be of unhewn stone, eight feet long, and four broad; the coals and bones fresh among the stones, and the stones burnt with fire. At the east end of this altar there was a pit, which was likewise overgrown with soil; which, on opening, was found to be the receiver where they swept in all that remained on the altar, after burning. On searching deep, the substance was found to be all alike, black and greasy. It had tinged the hill in a straight line, from the pit to the bottom of the hill.

a window we observed him stalking among the ruins, sometimes with a measured pace, and at times urged on by sudden starts; his hands locked in each other, and his eyes fixed on the sky. What a subject was here for one of our modern romances, who deal so largely in mysterious figures, noises, &c. who by raising some "white mist, hovering in the air," with the help of a few uncertain rays of the moon, which might fall upon a rusty dagger, and a drop or two of blood upon the pavement, might produce as excellent a ghost of this poor lunatic as ever was made.

Our surmises were justified, for we found he was mere flesh and blood, and had inhabited that tower for these eleven years past, subsisting on the bounty of Dr. Madden, who holds the living. He comes regularly up to the parsonage-house, which stands on the top of this sloping lawn, and receives his meals, which he carries down to his cell and there deposits; this place he fortifies ingeniously against

against the winter blasts, by matted straw and hay, and renders it really a warm, comfortable abode. Amongst the country people he passes for a person of some influence among the fairies, with whom they frequently hear him in earnest conversation. Sometimes he is seen sitting with his legs dangling out of an high window in the tower, making long speeches to the moon; and when the goddess veils her face behind a cloud, he exhorts her to re-appear in a strain of tremendous vociferation.

At the entrance of the village is a good bridge; close to which is an high mound of earth, whereon we could trace the indentation of some old fortifications, and the remains of strong walls, at its base. This was, most probably, the station which commanded the passage of the river, as in some parts here it is shallow. The river obtained its name from the death of Nial, a king of the race of Hermon, anno 859; who, plunging into its waters to save one of his attendants that was

carried

carried down the stream by the force of the current in attempting to ford it, unhappily fell himself a victim to his humanity. Hence it was called the King's River.

After curiosity had been fully gratified here, we rode on to Kilree, one mile and a half further, to see one of those round towers which are peculiar to Ireland. We found here a small ruined church, apparently of great antiquity from its style of architecture. About thirty paces from it is the tower, 70 feet high; its diameter at the base about 16. The entrance is 8 or 9 feet from the ground, but no vestiges of steps to ascend to it. It is rent by lightning from the battlements to the very foundation; and has been so as far back as the oldest inhabitant can remember; yet still resists the violence of the strongest winds, unprotected by any high grounds. Near it we observed a richly sculptured cross, a single block of granite, 10 feet high. While I was making a sketch of it, I was amused with

with a traditionary account of the spot, not uninteresting. It came from an old man, whose silver locks and venerable manner commanded my attention, and almost my belief. One of the many anecdotes he related, was, that underneath the cross lay an ancient king who was drowned in the river near Kills; which was by no means improbable, as the name of this spot, Kilree, (Kil-ri) signifies the cell, or burial-place of the king*; and is, perhaps, the monument of Nial, of whom I have spoken.

Quitting Kilree, and following the bendings of the river, four miles and a half brought us to Callan, a town now of no note, and seems to

* These towers were generally built near cathedrals, or noted places; and crosses usually were erected over the bodies of the most eminent persons, after christianity was received. In pagan times, huge pillar stones, unhewn, marked the graves of their chiefs; sometimes many were piled on each other in a surprising manner; the number of which, probably, distinguished his rank, or greatness of his actions.

be

be in the same ruins that Cromwell left it. It consists of four principal streets, crossing each other at right angles, very badly paved: yet, notwithstanding its present ruinous neglected appearance, the documents of its ancient respectability remain, and sadly prove the mutability of earthly things. The church, which stands on the left of the High Street, was once a stately building, but now nearly all a ruin; for the chancel only is roofed, in which divine service is performed; the nave and two lateral ailes are open and ruinous, presenting their moss-clad walls, and mouldering arches, with prostrate images and venerable tombs—a crumbling mass!—conveying the idea of desolation and the absence of man; yet this parish is worth 2000l. per annum. The north aile, or chapel, was erected by a lady, whose tomb is shewn close to the altar; over which is a light, beautiful window, very perfect. I observed a quaint style of ornament through this building, and a studied irregularity

rity in the decorations. We were made acquainted with a singular property of conveying sound, in the great moulding round the south door. J. H. stood on one side, whilst I, on the other, whispered a sentence hardly distinguishable to myself, yet it was conveyed to him with great strength and precision.

The abbey is situated on the east side of the town, among pleasant meadows watered by the river which divides above the town, and unites below it. This abbey was founded by James Butler, where he was interred in 1487; though some ascribe it to Hugh de Mapilton, bishop of Ossory, in the reign of Henry III. The chancel and steeple are standing, but very little of the nave remains. The surrounding grounds are strewed with mutilated ornaments, which, with some tombs in the chancel, shew the style to have been very rich. The east window is totally gone. Near the banks of the river are the remains of a fountain or well, built of black marble: the water gushes

up

up with great force, and passes through large channels, or troughs of marble, towards the river. This probably was in the gardens of the monks. During the disagreements between the lords of English blood, long established in the country, and those but newly come over, anno 1345, Desmond being the head of the first party, summoned a parliament to meet at Callan, in opposition to Ralph Ufford, lord deputy, who was sent over by Edward III. and who had convened a meeting at Dublin, at which Desmond refused to attend. Cromwell took this town by storm, and put to death all he found in arms, Col. Butler's regiment excepted, who surrendered before a cannon was fired against the place. Part of the walls, with some strong towers, remain an evidence of its former respectability. Two miles from Callan, we entered the county of Tipperary, and hearing that the bridge at this side of Featherd had been destroyed by the recent floods, we were obliged to change our route,

route, and take the road to Killenaule, which in itself is a very sorry village, but from the charming face of the country is rendered interesting. Hard by, there is a good colliery called Listen Rock, where there is an excellent coal found, but not worked with any degree of spirit. The surface of the plains around us, pleasantly varied by pasture and tillage, rises gently for some miles. Passing under the walls of Mr. Pennyfather's fine seat, we soon after arrived at the brow of a hill, which overlooks the surrounding country. Here we got the first glimpse of Cashel, an object so wonderfully striking, that we involuntarily stopped to pay a tribute of admiration; then slowly descending the road which winds round an eminence, on the eastern side of the town, the picture unfolded itself. The first object which fastens on the attention, is the celebrated rock, crowned with its venerable cathedral, which, like a proud Italian citadel, lifts its lofty towers to a majestic height, and seems

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the great protector of the city;—but, "alas! how fallen!—how changed!" From the base of the rock, the town stretches along to the left; its new cathedral, the archiepiscopal house and gardens, with the suburbs, form an excellent middle distance, beyond which the eye wanders over a tract of country, fraught with innumerable beauties: the little village, and lordly demesne; the humble cottage and ruined tower; the grove, lawn, and rivulet, all in their turn court the eye, till at length it reposes on the distant Gaultec mountains, whose clear ethereal blue gives a delightful finish to the picture.

After dinner we walked through the town, which pleased us exceedingly by its general neatness and cleanliness. An apparent ease and comfort in the circumstances of the inhabitants will strike the observer, notwithstanding little or no appearance of trade. From the many lively animated faces we have met with in the streets, I am very willing to think

think Cashel still deserves its celebrity for beauty and fashion.

This city was formerly the residence of the kings of South Munster, who were bishops as well as kings. The celebrated Cornac M'Culenan was king of Munster, and bishop of Cashel, anno 901; a custom which was in use even before Cormac; for we find that Olcobar, who died anno 851, was king of Cashel, and bishop of Emly*; likewise Cenfelad, who died 872. This custom was not peculiar to the Irish, for among the Jews we find Jonathan, Simon, and John Hyrcanus, who held the temporal government along with the priesthood.

The Romans, likewise, have given in many instances similar. Anciently the see of Emly was the archbishoprick of Munster; and St. Albe, a man of much piety and learning, placed at its head by St. Patrick, or rather

* A small, ancient town, of which very little traces are now left.

confirmed in it; as he, as well as St. Declan, and St. Kieran, preached the gospel 30 years before the arrival of St Patrick, who found St. Albe in Munster. At an early period the see was established in Cashel, and continues to be the archbishoprick of Munster. Some vestiges of the walls of the city remain, with the ruins of the hospital of St. Nicholas, and the abbey of Black Monk's, near the rock; the walls, comprehending an extent much more considerable than the present bounds of the city, which is but the skeleton of what it once was. In the seventh year of Edward II. "an assize was brought by the abbot of St. Mary's of the rock of Cashel, against 38 brewers of the town, for disseizing him of two flaggons of ale, *de quâlibet Bructiâ cer visiæ Bructiatæ ad vendendum* out of every brewing for sale; and he derived his title through the seizen and grant of Marian O'Brien, archbishop of Cashel, to the hospital of St Nicholas of Cashel, and through the union of that hospital

hospital to the abbey of St. Mary, and the confirmation of king Edward I. of that union*:" a proof

* The Jury found that Donat O'Lonargan, archbishop of Cashel, was the first who procured Cashel to be erected into a borough; and that he gave burgage holdings to the burgesess, reserving out of each holding twelve pence; that, upon the death of Donat, Marian O'Brien succeeded, who had a seneschal, named David Latimer; that the said Latimer had a fair daughter who hated a leper worse than death. It happened one day, that Latimer's wife sent this her daughter to serve the poor, amongst whom was a leper: the daughter was affrighted at the sight, and, throwing down the bread, ran away. This conduct so incensed the leper, that he prayed to God that she might be afflicted with the same disorder before the year came about; and it happpened according to his prayer. The father, touched by his daughter's misfortune, built a lazar house, in which he placed 14 beds, and endowed it with four plow lands; and the burgesses, for the better support of this hospital, (when David M'Kelly was archbishop) granted two flaggons of drink out of every brewing for sale. That, upon the death of David M'Kelly, David M'Carwell succeeded, who founded the said abbey which stood near the rock. That there was then in that place an abbey of Black Monks, and archbishop David

a proof of the superior population of that period to the present. The archiepiscopal house is a large plain building, adorned with pleasant gardens. The library is esteemed valuable, containing many curious manuscripts; amongst which is said to be that curious piece of antiquity called the Psalter of Cashel, written by Cormac M'Culenan, so justly celebrated for his wisdom as a legislator, and military fame as a warrior. The new cathedral

having told his mother that he dreamed the Black Monks would cut off his head, by her advice he turned the monks out, and gave all their possessions to the abbey which he had newly founded; and David being desirous of uniting the hospital of St. Nicholas to the abbey of his own foundation, he came to the hospital and forcibly turned the inhabitants out, broke open their chests, and carried away their charters, and by his own deed united it to the abbey. The jury further found, that the burgesses of Cashel were compelled, by the same David, to pay the same duties to the monks of the abbey of his new foundation, as they had done before to the house of lepers.

WARE'S ANTIQUITIES.

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is a magnificent structure of Grecian architecture; yet, notwithstanding its beauty and freshness, I cannot reflect on the venerable rock, without commisserating in its forlorn and neglected situation. Noble, amidst its ruins, it seems to frown in its misfortunes, and from its daring height, looks down contemptuous upon each new-born pile. To-morrow we shall visit it; after which, you shall hear from me soon. Farewel, my dear Sir, and believe me,

Your's,

Very truly,

G. H.

LETTER II.

Cashel, Aug. 12.

DEAR SIR,

THIS morning, after an early breakfast, we ascended the rock, not without several pauses to admire this stupendous ruin, whose awful towers and projecting buttresses seemed to overhang us in our approach.

The surface of the summit is very irregular, producing several pretty swells, and covered with a rich soil. A wall of some strength encircles it, which, by following the slopes and indentations of the rock, discovers the base of the ruin in many places, rising from its green and tufted bed. We entered by a lofty gate in the great western tower, originally

To face page 83

nally a part of the regal palace, from which we passed to the north cross, containing the chapel of the apostles, and some private chapels. I observed a few tombs richly sculptured, but no inscription legible. In the centre of the chapel is a deep excavation like a well, which, we were informed, was the commencement of a subterraneous passage leading to Hore Abbey, which lies in the vale about a quarter of a mile from the rock. It is exceedingly deep, and appears well built: the steeple rises from four finely proportioned arches: the floors are all destroyed; owing, it is said, to the great bell having fallen while taking down to be removed; it broke through all the floors, and sunk itself considerably in the ground floor. The western tower is spacious, and formerly contained many magnificent rooms, befitting the splendour of their ancient possessors: the ornaments round the windows and in the seats are curious, and rich in their style. From these apartments, the coun-

try is overlooked for many miles round, gratifying the eye with a prospect of as rich a tract as can be met with, stretching through the most fertile vales of the county of Tipperary. The choir and nave are strewed over with the mutilated remains of its former decorations; and tombs, weeds, and rubbish, so choak up the whole, that I with great difficulty could pace it from end to end. It is about 210 feet, as well as I could judge by my obstructed steps. The east window lies prostrate; but so broken, that any traces of its original form or richness no longer exist.

Adjoining the south cross is Cormac's chapel and hall of audience; a relick of our ancient architecture, well worthy the antiquarian's close observation. The first room is about 53 feet by 19; the sides decorated by rows of slender columns one above the other, supporting semicircular arches richly ornamented. In the east end is a large niche, which formerly, they tell us, contained the regal throne,

but

Cormac's Chapel, on the south side of the Cathedral of Cashel. Coumbrat. Tithsarration.

but I think more probably an altar; the roof is vaulted; and, over the niche, is enriched with skulls of various animals, whimsically delineated, but boldly sculptured.

I observed the remains of some bass reliefs and painted plaster, probably a species of fresco; for, notwithstanding there is not any mention made of the art of painting being in use in the earlier ages, yet the silence of history is by no means a proof of its non-existence. Fresco, of all the branches of the art, is most perishable; depending not only on heat and dryness, but on the firmness and durability of the surface on which it is laid: and when we consider the constant succession of miseries brought on this country by ceaseless warfare, in which our ancient buildings always suffered by burning and plundering, &c. we need not wonder at finding few or no vestiges of the art surviving the general wreck: and where an excellent skill in architecture existed, as is demonstrable in the present instance,

stance, why should we discourage the idea of the sister art having an infantine existence at the same period? From the hall, a small staircase leads to an apartment over it of the same length and breadth, but not so high; the roof, composed of one semicircular arch, admirably built, and perfect as the first day, having resisted the tooth of time now nearly 900 years, being built by Cormac M'Culenan, anno 901, and is the only original part of the great building; the church being rebuilt by Donald O'Brien, King of Limerick, about the year 1167*. Passing through a low door into an uncovered space, enclosed by walls and towers belonging to the more modern part of the building, we were shewn the mausoleum in

* The annals of the priory of the island of All Saints, say it was rebuilt or repaired 1134; and after being consecrated, there was a synod held in it; that, in 1167, Donald O'Brien built a new church, and endowed it, converting the old one into a chapel, on the south side of the choir.

which

which Cormac's* body was deposited; plain and massy, and, as well as the chapel, very unlike the style of building throughout the other parts of this great ruin. Over the door through which we entered, there is a tablet, on which, in basso relievo, is represented a winged animal, resembling a bull, very rude and uncouth. No inscriptions are to be seen on the tomb. On the outside of the

* Cormac (as was usual in these times) fell in the field of battle, in a place called Moy-albe, (the white field) in the plains of Sliewmargie: with him fell Fogartach, Prince of Kerry, and Keilach, Prince of Ossory. He commanded the army of Munster, against that of Leinster and Conaught. During the disorder and heat of the battle, his horse fell into a pit; but being remounted, and the battle lost, he attempted to save himself by flight; and, climbing a steep ascent, which was rendered slippery from the blood of the slain, his horse made a false step, and, falling backwards, tumbled down the hill, by which he was instantly killed. Some authors affirm, that he was the aggressor, and advanced into Leinster: be it as it may, he has left behind him a name revered to this hour, among the people in these parts.

building

building the same fantastical heads are introduced. On the east angle of the north cross stands one of those towers or steeples*. It

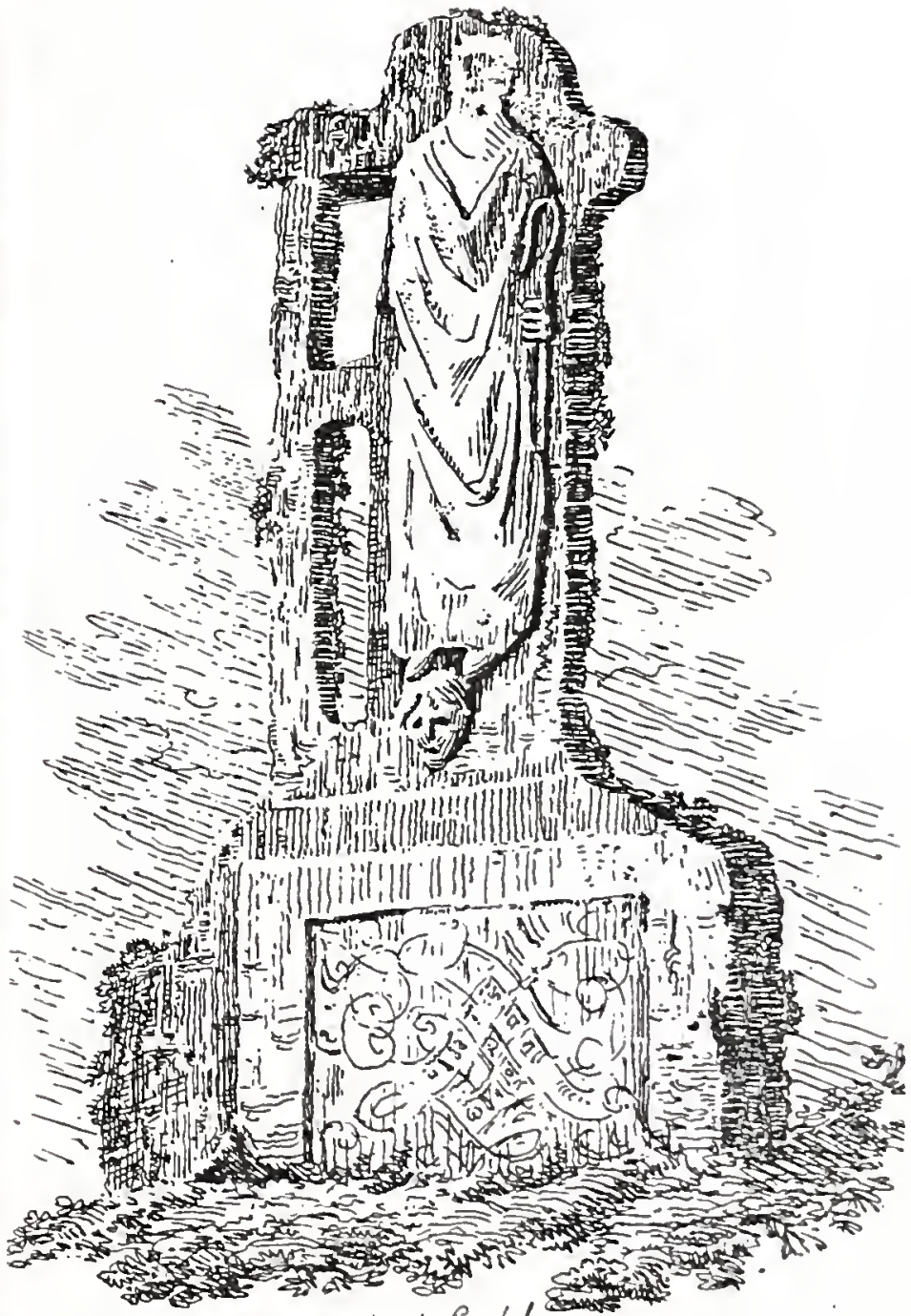
* The antiquity of these round towers has given rise to various speculations. Sir Thomas Mollyneux's opinion has hitherto been much followed, yet I do not perceive much reason in his arguments. it seems to have been a favourite system of his, to attribute most of the antiquities that we meet with, to the Danes; and these among the rest. He argues from the name given to these towers by the Irish, viz. Cloghachd, which he derives from the Germanico Saxon word Clugga, (i. e. a bell) and that they were erected for the purpose of belfries to call the people to worship. Now if the Danes were the authors of these buildings, we must naturally expect to meet with them all through England, as well as in Denmark, where, it is well known, they never were found. I am rather of Mr. Smith's opinion, who derives their name from Cloch-an-coire (i. e. the stone of the anchorite). In the east, towers or pillars were built for the reception of monks who lived on the top of them, as is mentioned by Evagrius in the Life of St. Symeon, the Stylite, so named from his having lived in a pillar forty years; and it seems very probable that our ancient religions took

It seems of a more ancient date than the church, being built of free-stone; and all the other buildings of a black marble. Nothing can exceed the workmanship of it. The roof is intire; and of jointed stones so admirably put together, that it appears as smooth as the inside of a China bowl. The entrance is not from the ground, but through a long passage

took the idea of these towers from Asia, which they early visited; and in some old manuscripts they are mentioned as the residences of penitents, and by some called Inclusoriâ, and Arcti Inclusorii Ergastula, the prisons of a narrow inclosure. The Irish name for a penance is Turris; which, in Latin, is a tower. The manuscripts add, that penitents were placed in the top, and having made a probation of a stated time proportionable to their crimes, were allowed to descend to the next floor, and so on by degrees till they reach the ground; and at the door, (which always faced the entrance into the church) received the benediction of the clergy, and the prayers of the people. At Drumlahan there is a tradition prevailing, that an hermit lived on the top of one of these towers, which stands in the church-yard of that place. SMITH'S HISTORY OF WATERFORD.

in the wall of the Apostles' chapel, about 20 feet above the surface of the floor. On the south angle of the cross, at the distance of about 30 feet, is a curious piece of antique sculpture, consisting of a block of granite, five feet square, from which rises another, in some parts perforated, about ten feet high, facing east and west. To the east is a figure of a bishop in his pontificals; probably St. Patrick, (to whom the church was dedicated.) That looking to the west is so defaced, that its subject is doubtful; I imagine it to have been a crucifixion. At this stone the kings of Munster were crowned, war declared, and tribute received. The celebrated Lia Fail (a fatal stone,) was used by the supreme monarchs for the same purposes. The history of this stone is something singular, being still in the use to which it was originally applied.

In the year 513, Fergus, a prince of the royal line, having obtained the Scottish crown,



Antient Monument at Castel. J Holmes Sculpt

crown, requested leave of the monarch to remove the Lia Fail into Scotland for his coronation; a prophecy then prevailing, that where the stone was kept, the Milesian line of kings would govern a powerful monarchy. It remained at Scone until Edward I. of England, having conquered great part of Scotland, removed it thence into England, and placed it in Westminster Abbey for the use of the British monarchs: where it remains underneath the antient coronation chair to this hour. It is something singular to observe, that the present royal line derive their title from a daughter of James I. of England, who was lineally descended from this Fergus*.

Hore Abbey, which I have mentioned already, was founded by David M'Carwell, archbishop of Cashel, 1272, to aggrandize which, he unjustly stripped the Benedictine convent, and the hospital of St. Nicholas. It was a

* Warner's History of Ireland.

considerable

considerable building, but is now uninteresting. It is in a charming fertile vale, about a quarter of a mile from the cathedral. To-morrow we go forward. Adieu,

My dear Sir,

And believe me, as usual,

Your sincere friend,

G. H.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Silvermines, August 14, 1797.

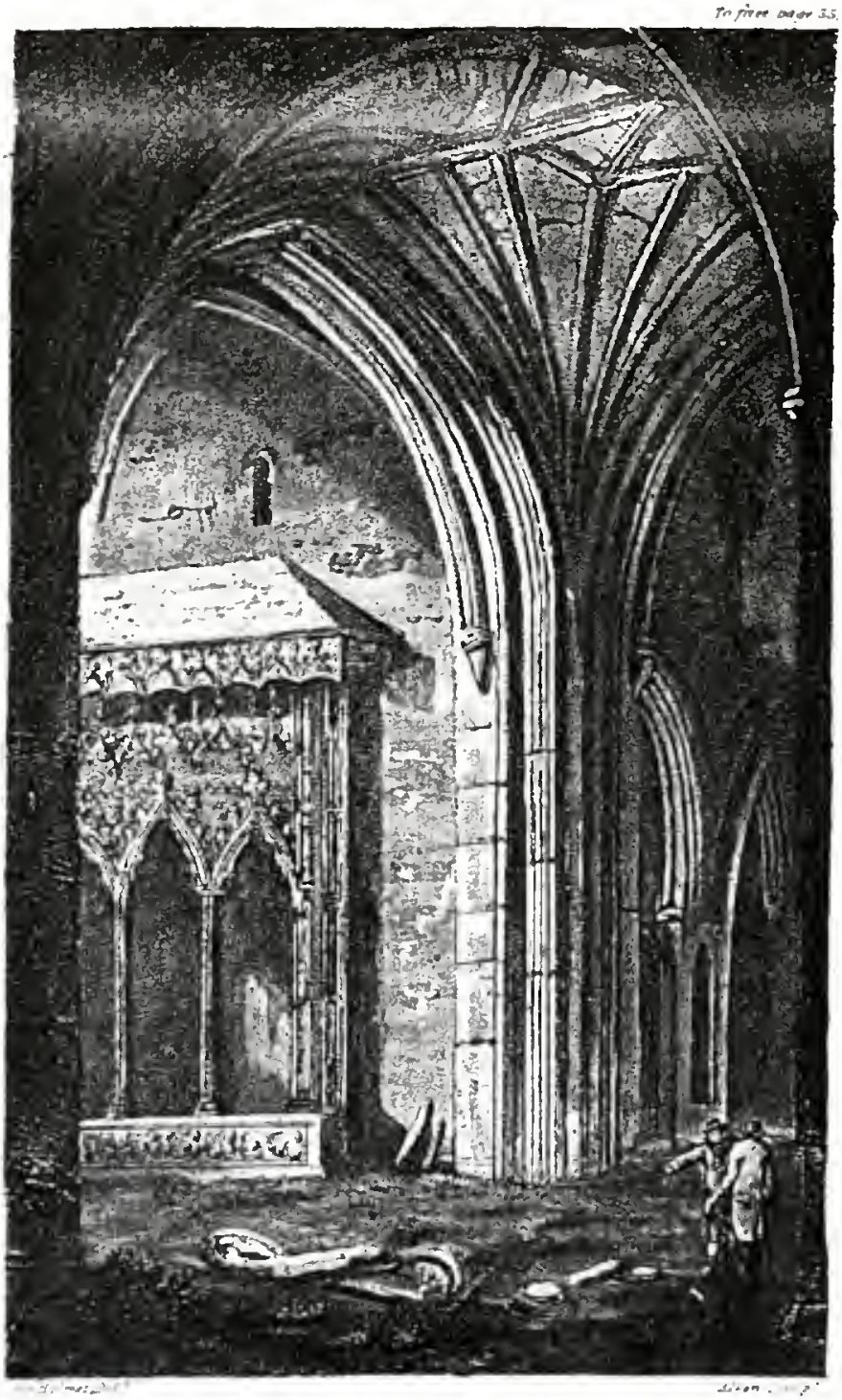
DEAR SIR,

YESTERDAY, after hearing divine service at the Cathedral, we prepared for the road. We were highly delighted with the music; the singers are numerous and well chosen, and under the fostering care of the present archbishop, the choir has risen to a pitch of excellence well befitting a metropolis; the organ is a fine new instrument, and admirably performed on by Mr. Mathews.

Mounting our horses we rode off for Holy Cross, a village charmingly seated upon the river Suir, and surrounded by a fine country.

We entered the village over a bridge of nine or ten arches, and enquiring for the inn, were directed to a small house, the comfortless appearance of which gave but a bad earnest of its accommodations. Having conducted our horses through the second best room in the house, into the yard, we had the satisfaction of seeing them, however, well lodged, and while dinner was preparing we walked through the little garden of the inn to view the abbey; a most venerable piece of antiquity indeed, once giving its name to the surrounding district: its walls may be traced through all the neighbouring gardens, and half the houses in the village are composed of the spoils of this fine ruin. We entered from the back of the garden, by descending a very steep and broad flight of steps, into the south cross; nothing can exceed the elegant lightness of the decorations, and the whole being of black marble, the hardness and durability of which, firmly resisting the corrosion

To face page 55.



Interior view of the Abby of Holy-Cross. County of Tipperary.

rosion of time, will probably descend to posterity a proud and tasteful monument of the style of the 10th century*.

The east end is so thickly mantled over with ivy that the great window is nearly choaked up, admitting but a few partial rays of the sun, but those fortunately rested upon the tomb of Donald, king of Limerick, the founder, and produced a most happy effect. Those rays, though feeble, were sufficient to disclose the beauties of this monument, in which simplicity and elegance are happily combined; the workmanship is exquisite and fresh as on the first day of its erection.

In the south cross there are some curious remains of the shrine, in which was deposited (as the monks pretended) a piece of the cross on which Christ suffered; and to which this

* Posterity must be indebted to the care and taste of Mr. Armstrong (on whose estate it stands) for its preservation. He has erected doors which are kept locked; the key lies with the person of the inn. ARMSTRONG.

abbey was dedicated, anno 1169. On the north chapel is a monument of Italian marble, the great slab is broken in two, the internal part full of bones. After dinner, lured by the calmness of the evening, we strolled along the banks of the river, highly delighted with the scenery. Here we met a truly rustic groupe; the young men and women of the village were enjoying themselves by a dance; a fidler and piper emulously lent their strains, which were not ill bestowed upon their hearers, for they shewed, by their rude jokes and merry glee, how open the mind is to the effect of music, even of the coarsest kind. Each young man as he took his partner gave an halfpenny to the piper, and then set too with all their heart and soul. Content and harmless mirth are, I am sure, acceptable offerings to our creator, and in a much higher degree than all the gloomy self-denial of the cloistered monk—one voluntary sigh of humble thankfulness, springing from a grateful

and

and cheerful heart, finds easier access to the throne of mercy than all the raging sorrows and health-consuming abstinences of monastic discipline. Leaving them to their pastime, we rambled on still farther, till warned by the quick approach of evening we returned.

From Holy Cross we rode on by Farney Bridge, the seat of Mr. Armstrong, through a country which, as well as the time of evening enabled us to judge, was finely improved*. Passing Fishmoyne, we arrived at Brookly, the residence of Mr. H. here we found an hearty welcome, and were obliged to submit

* On these plains O'Brien of Thomond attacked and cut to pieces an army of Danes, who were marching to reinforce Richard Earl Strongbow, then advancing into Munster. On intelligence of this discomfiture, the Earl retreated with the precipitation of a routed General, nor stopped till he arrived under the walls of Waterford, within which he found shelter. Some writers assert that the Earl himself received a signal defeat.

LELAND'S HIST. IRELAND.

ourselves to all manner of old customs; that of hospitality to visitors and strangers is almost the last trait which remains of the original manners of our ancestors, and I believe will cease only with the name of the country*. However, as our pursuits would not permit us to accord with the wishes of our kind host, we left Brookly this morning, and rode on by Burnsoleigh for Silvermines; the scenery wild and romantic. On our right, those great mountains which form the boundary of the county of Tipperary, lifted their rugged summits to the clouds; that immense chasm or gap, called by the natives of those hills, the Devil's Bit, appearing very distinct and grotesque. We continued on, over a

* Amongst the antient Irish, hospitality was a principal virtue, and, enjoined by law; the Brehon institutes expressly command, that no rath (i. e. residence) shall break up suddenly, *lest the traveller should be disappointed in his reception.*

LELAND'S HIST. OF IRELAND, Introduction, p. xxxv.

mountainous

mountainous tract, in some parts highly cultivated even to the tops, others naked rock; the vallies beautifully fertile, and thickly covered with herds and flocks, with here and there a shepherd's lonely cot. In our front, those lofty hills about Silvermines, with the great keeper mountain, whose dark and precipitate sides, elevated to a fearful height, towered above all supreme, and gave a truly Alpine effect to the whole. The beautiful seat of Castle Otway, afforded an interesting change; and further, on the noble demesne of Kilboy, the residence of Mr. Prettie, from its finely varied grounds, softened down the roughness of the scene, and relieved the eye by contrast.

The village of Silvermines is a ruinous and deserted looking spot, though bearing evident marks of former population. Here we stopped, and while our horses fed, I wandered among the rocks, picking up fossils for my friend, Dr. B.; my fellow traveller, J. H. sought

out an acquaintance residing near the village, who politely pressed us to remain with him this night; offering his assistance in shewing us such objects as from their locality might escape our observation. We willingly accepted his kind offer, and before dinner, walked with him up the side of the adjoining mountain, rising immediately behind his house.

About half way up, we caught the distant plain beneath, expanding as we rose. This tempted us still higher, and we made no pause till we had gained the summit. Here we rested, to enjoy the fruits of our labour, and dwell upon the beauteous landscape, indulging in a thousand visionary pleasures that arose in our minds in delightful succession.

In the vale beneath us, were seated the house and extensive parks of Kilboy: on the right, the brow of a hill, rough and broken with scattered rock, and bushy underwood, formed an admirable fore-ground: the eminence

nence, from our feet declining quickly, for half a mile, gradually sloped into a delightful plain, finely variegated by woods, pasture, and tillage: in the distance appeared the town of Nenagh, rising from a bosom of trees, partially illumined by the sun-beams, which sported along the plain in scattered patches, now gilding one object, then shifting to another: beyond the town, the Shannon appeared like liquid silver, rolling his majestic stream through a long line of fertile country. Still further from the sight, the dying forms uncertain, if beheld, receding behind each other, mingled into one grand mass of shade, which imperceptibly blended into æther. This was a scene highly calculated to rouse the faculties of the mind; and busy fancy soon began to work upon it, painting the numberless blessings of this noble river, the industry of its towns, its commerce and manufactures, and all the attendant comforts of society. Then casting my eyes back upon those wide

tracts

tracts of mountain which I had but just left behind; whose simple inhabitants, still in the first stage only of civilization, doomed to earn a poor pittance by idle wanderings after herds and flocks, the flesh of which they are not destined to eat, produced a train of reflections and comparisons, not of the pleasantest kind. The propagation of live stock is always destructive to population. By agriculture and manufactures we find it constantly promoted. This is evident from the example of China, Persia, and the Indies; and even many countries in Europe. In the three first great empires, where the human race multiply with an astonishing rapidity, they depend for subsistence on the cultivation of their lands; on the contrary, in America, Tartary, and other pasturage countries, the human kind are comparatively few, as it regards the extent of their country.

Farewel, my dear Sir,

And believe me,

Yours, &c. G. H.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Limerick, August 16, 1797.

DEAR SIR,

I DO not wonder at your expressing surprise, agreeable as you are good enough to term it, at the frequency of my letters; but the truth is, I am now in such habits of scratching down my ideas, either with my pencil or pen, that I find my head unable to retain the vast variety which passes before my eye; and as each object leaves a memorandum on my mind, they accumulate to such a load, that I find myself very willing to share the burthen with my friends.

Yesterday morning before breakfast, we walked over to the mines; the hills bear all the outward marks of internal wealth. I never

never saw finer studies for the painter; the various stains, the effects of mineral water dropping from them, and ouzing through their jagged sides, the shattered fragments split from the mountain's side, where the dark gashes, torn and blackened by the explosion of the powder in mining, a few blasted stumps and burnt herbage, give it all the character of Salvator's savagely picturesque pencil: it wanted but a few of his Condottoi to give the finish, and these it was easy for the mind to furnish. From the innumerable shafts and levels, with other works, overgrown with creeping briers and weeds, it appears that those mines have been worked with vigour even some centuries back. The present inhabitants do not remember them ever to have been productive of silver: yet few places obtain a name that does not originate from their properties, appearances, &c. And as those mines now give their name to a large district, it is more than probable that our ancestors worked

ed them as silver mines, though now they are dwindled into insignificance, through want of enterprize and capital*.

From

* In the county of Wicklow there is a mine of gold, which is but lately, and imperfectly known to the public, although it has for many years back been enriching a few families of farmers and peasants. In England, many doubt its existence, and notwithstanding its being in the hands of the crown, the same spiritless exertions are visible with it, as in most other works of the kind. It is situated about eight miles from Rathdrum, and four from Acklow: the hills are very lofty, and do not produce heath, which most mountains of their magnitude do; but rather a good kind of herbage, totally uncultivated, inhabited only by goats and sheep. The highest of those hills is called Crowhan; it is bounded by several lesser hills whose bases join and form a small glen, through which runs an inconsiderable stream. Near the top of the Crowhan, a great Cliff is observable; from which issues a spring, taking its course nearly in a straight line through the mountain: in its way it is joined by two smaller streams at right angles. From this it flows on through a little valley 4 or 5 miles to the sea: this is called Ranalaigh, and in this narrow valley, not more than 20 yards in breadth, the first quantity of gold was found. The largest piece

From the mines we strayed half a mile further, to see the ruined castle of Dunally, which stands on the brow of an immense

piece was taken up by a party of six men, who went to work in a small shaking bog. It weighed twenty-two ounces, and was purchased by Mr. Camac on the spot, for sixty-eight guineas: it exceeds by eight ounces the largest piece ever found in South America, or elsewhere. The only ore to be found, is a singular ore of iron, Pyrites, among the smaller hills, but none on the great Crowhan. The gold has been found no higher than where the iron is visible; it has been got in large quantities in a kind of slaty rock, the crevices of which are filled with a blackish earth, and small fragments of quartz. The general appearance of the stones which compose the lesser hills, is a wavy argillaceous shistous, differing very much in colour and texture, as red, brown, and blue; the latter seems to be most general. The quartz are singular in their whiteness, and run in veins through the shistous, in which masses of the gold were found. The shistous does not split into regular slates, but is quite splintery. Amongst this, about two feet below the surface, were found considerable quantities of gold; but the greater part amongst the sand and gravel of the banks of the stream.

rock.

rock, overhanging a rude precipice; round two sides of the castle, an impetuous torrent sweeps from the neighbouring hills, and through a chasm in the cliff, close to the base of the castle, tumbles down in broken falls, through hanging bushes, and furze breaks, into the low grounds, an height of sixty feet, forming an effect highly picturesque.

After breakfast, we crossed the mountain, and walked to Coomleagh, a small deep glen, where Mr. Prettie has built a neat cottage, and fitted it with every necessary article for rural parties; and here he has fixed on a spot, which for its size I never have seen excelled in the picturesque and beautiful. Great nature exhibits her grand primeval forms, unhurt by the officious hand of tasteless art, "it seems the haunt of wood-gods only." During our passage across the mountain, we started innumerable large deer, who

ramble

ramble over those hills, unrestrained by wall or fence, in all their wild original state.

We left Silvermines this morning early; it required an exertion to part from so delightful a spot, and from such kind friends, to whose politeness we felt ourselves very much indebted. The road to Killaloe leads through a north tract of fertile country but thinly inhabited. We crossed the Shannon, over a bridge of nineteen arches, which connects the counties of Tipperary, Limerick, and Clare. Killaloe stands upon the latter; it excites no prepossessing ideas on approaching it, being a very old town, and with little or no trade.

The Cathedral stands high, and is the first object which catches the attention, it is a venerable building, large, simple, and heavy; the great aisle very lofty, and producing an uncommon lengthened and solemn echo from our footsteps. There are few or no monuments: one only, I recollect, which they called

called the tomb of Brien Boroimhe; but in this they mistake; it is more probably that of Moriertach O'Brien*, king of North Munster, who

* In this Moriertach's reign, the great king of Norway sent his ambassadors with a pair of his shoes, which he commanded Moriertach to carry on his shoulders in his palace, on the day of the nativity of our Lord, in token of submission to the great king. The Irish were much incensed, but the prudent king answered the ambassadors, saying, he would not only carry the shoes but eat them, rather than the great king should harass one of his provinces. This answer, I do not think, accords well with the accounts constantly sent from this country into England, by the English settlers, who described them as a blood-stained, savage nation, not possessing a single generous faculty: indeed, even in the sixteenth century, little or nothing of this country was known to England, except by individuals who served in the armies, or who were sent over in a civil capacity. In a work printed in folio, in London, in 1680, entitled, "Memorials of English affairs in Ireland," we find these words:—"1652, Jan. 30th. Letters from Ireland mention, that the barony of Burren, which they say has neither wood, water, or earth sufficient to hang, drown, or bury a man, refusing to pay contribution, was harassed by

who was a great benefactor to their church, and was interred in it. Most writers agree, that Brien Boroimhe, being killed at the battle of Clontarf, was buried near Dublin, either at Swords or Kilmainham. In the church-yard we observed an antique building which they called the prison-house of Brien, in which he immured his daughter; how true or false I cannot pretend to assert; but every relic of antiquity must have its little traditional history. It has every mark of high antiquity about it; very rude both in design as well as execution; the

Sir Charles Coote's forces; page 497." But pride and self-interest concurred in misrepresenting the Irish, and regarding them as a race utterly irreclaimable. The desperate resistance of the oppressed, and the violence of natural vanity, were readily mistaken for the outrages of a natural cruelty and barbarism.

LELAND'S HISTORY OF IRELAND.

This great king of Norway I find was killed in Ulster, where he landed with his invading army, and buried near St. Patrick's Church of Down, anno 1103.

SIR J. WARE.

roof

roof is of stone, and very perfect; the parts admirably well joined together.

The cathedral derives its name from St. Molua, who lived here in the sixth century. The first bishop was St. Flannan (son to king Theodoric) who was a disciple of St. Molua, and consecrated in Rome by Pope John IV. While he possessed the see, his father endowed the church of Killaloe with ample revenues, and was buried in it.

Close to the town there is a weir built, and a fishery for salmon established. The town owes much to the endeavours of Dr. Knox, the present bishop, for founding a free school for fifty poor children, and a dispensary, where a physician attends to give advice, and an apothecary to dispense medicines gratis to the poor.

The passage of the Shannon, here, was treacherously given up by Col. Fennel, to General Ireton, who, by that means, marched to the county of Clare, by the side of Limerick, to besiege it, in 1651.

From Killaloe we rode on by O'Brien's Bridge*, and encountered such a shower as obliged us to seek shelter in the inn. There is a chalybeate spring here, but totally neglected for that of Castle Connel. Crossing the bridge, we entered the county of Limerick by an admirable road through an extensive bog. Castle Connel is a pretty village on the banks of the Shannon; its neighbourhood beautifully ornamented by gentlemens' seats. The houses in general are small, but very neat, conveying the idea more of the environs of a metropolis than a village. Here we encountered equipages, and all the gay parade of fashionable

* Here M'Arthy of Desmond led his army against the English, who were re-building the castles from which they had been driven by the victorious troops of Cathal, Prince of Connaught. The English suffered a loss so disastrous, that they were pursued to Limerick, and driven from thence. M'Arthy confirming his superiority by twice defeating them in their attempts to recover that important place.

LELAND'S HISTORY OF IRELAND.

dissipation.

dissipation. I met but few valetudinarians, if I may judge by their faces, particularly amongst the females. All seemed healthful and animated with the same vivacity, apparently depending more upon cheerfulness and society, than upon the celebrity of the mineral waters*. The ruins of the castle are seated upon a rock, overhanging the high road which winds round its base, and commands the navigation of the river. It was built by Conal, a celebrated chieftain of this district, and afterwards enlarged by the English, and given to de Burgo, a baron of the family of Fitz Andelm, on condition of his holding it for the king. Notwithstanding its elevated situation, the ascent was so easy by steps, that a troop of cavalry has been drawn up in the

* Dr. Rutty places this spring in the same table with the German spa. It is of the same specific gravity, of a ferruginous and astringent taste; a gallon producing from twenty to thirty grains of sediment. It loses all its virtues by being warmed. The soil about it is calcareous.

great hall. During the siege of Limerick, Ginkle thought it a dangerous neighbour to the city, and after gaining possession of it, he dismantled it, and blew it up. This, as well as most other castles, has been stained by "many a foul and midnight murder."

The grandson of the great Brien Boroimhe, crossing the Shannon to hold a conference with the Prince of Thomond, unsuspicious of any foul design, left his train of followers behind on the western bank of the river; but when within the castle walls, the ungenerous Thomond, regardless of the sacred ties of hospitality, basely ordered the young Prince to be murdered. We strayed down the banks of the river to see the falls of Dunasse, (or Doonas) which form a picture the most interesting to be imagined. The banks on each side are ornamented by the two beautiful desmesnes of Hermitage and Dunasse, where every sport of nature has been happily taken advantage of, to vary the wild picturesque,

with

with the soft and beautiful. Above Dunasse, the river quietly flows with an uninterrupted course, till arriving at these shelving rocks, it dashes over their rugged sides, in reiterated falls of various heights, and precipitating itself into the lower bed, throws its white froth amidst the small islands which are scattered close at its base. The principal, Rook Island, seems to lay bedded in foam, lifting its green and waving trees above the mist, through which the sun-beams, darting in numberless rays, and producing various colours, give an appearance to the whole singularly beautiful. From this delightful spot, three miles and a half brought us to Limerick, by the finest road I ever saw. This city has all the bustle and appearance of business of a metropolis. I feel myself very much fatigued, and long to get to bed; so farewel,

My dear Sir,

And believe me, &c.

G. H.

LETTER V.

Limerick, 17th, Thursday-night.

DEAR SIR,

WE are half dead with the vapours; this morning has set in very wet and gloomy, totally upsetting the plan of operations which we had arranged last night, and which was to have been executed in the field; but since we are baffled in this, the business of the cabinet can go forward, so will dedicate a few hours to you, and say something of the city.

Limerick is a city and county in itself, and is the see of a bishop; by nature it is strongly fortified, both by its insulated situation,

tion, and by its not being commanded by contiguous hills, which in time of warfare might annoy it.

About a century and a half back, it was accounted the strongest fortress in Ireland, and of course deemed of the utmost consequence to be possessed of, and is celebrated by its numerous sieges*.

The

* In 1650, Cromwel lay on the Munster side, with a powerful and victorious army, and the Marquis of Ormond on the county of Clare side. The latter, from his knowledge of the strength and importance of the place, eagerly importuned the citizens to admit him and his army into the citadel, to defend it for Charles I. against Cromwel. The former could make no impression on the citizens, though he held out many lures to them; and the latter would not be admitted, as they suspected his sincerity. 1651, Ireton obtained possession of it for the parliament, through the treachery of Col. Fennel, after a siege attended with considerable loss. 1690, King William, with an army of twenty thousand men, after a tedious and fruitless attempt, was obliged to raise the siege. 1691, General Ginkle invested it, and after a gallant resistance, it surrendered upon

The Shannon here divides itself, and forms an island called the King's Island, on which that part of the city denominated the English town, is built, and is connected by Baal's Bridge, with the Irish town, which lies on the eastern bank of the river. The ancient name of this city was Lumneach (i. e. a place made bare by the feeding of horses) derived from its first founders, who, being a wandering and barbarous sect, used to retire to this island with the spoils which they had wrested from their neighbours; and this being the only part of the river from Killaloe to the sea, which is fordable, it naturally offered itself as a safe retreat, where they could easily defend themselves against a very superior enemy. In the year 855, the Danes took possession of

upon terms highly honourable and advantageous to the garrison, by which they gained for their Roman Catholic brethren, throughout Ireland, those celebrated conditions. Derry and Limerick, will ever grace the historic page, as rivals of Irish bravery and integrity.

it,

it, and enlarged it. Under their government it continued till the reign of Brien Boroimhe, the powerful and successful enemy of those Northerns; he obliged them to acknowledge him as their monarch, and pay a yearly tribute of 365 tons of claret. Brien died anno 1014; yet, notwithstanding his power, we find that, previous to his death, the Danes had sufficient strength and influence to procure four bishops of their own nation, in succession, totally independent of the archbishops of Cashel; and had them all consecrated by the archbishops of Canterbury, to whom only they owned submission.

On the arrival of Henry II. in Ireland, O'Brien of Thomond, met him on the banks of the Suir, surrendered his city of Limerick, and did homage for the rest of his territory, which was confirmed on him, and created a baron.

Donald O'Brien died 1194, and with him ended the kingdom of Limerick, or North Munster.

Munster*. He was succeeded by his son Carbrac, whose power was of little consequence, and his title an empty name; there being an English governor and garrison then in Limerick. It continued for a long period to be the principal seat of the de Burgo's power, who, in course of time, from being governors under the kings of England, assumed an independent sovereignty, making war and peace, without consulting the pale; insomuch that the king's deputies have been frequently obliged to march against them, to curb their ambitious views.

* On his death the English penetrated into the heart of Thomond, committing great excesses, particularly on the family of Donald, one of whose sons was deprived of his eyes, and another dragged from the sanctuary, in which he had taken refuge, and murdered.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

19th, Saturday night.

THE approach to Limerick, on the western side, is across the great branch of the Shannon, by Thomond bridge, which was built 1210, or thereabout; and is remarkable in being flat, and not having two arches alike in their dimensions. When we reflect on the time that this bridge was built, and the uncommon appearance it presents to an architect, by its irregularity, and the turbulence of the floods which it has to oppose, we are led to believe that in point of building, our ancestors were our equals, and we can boast of no superiority.

This

This bridge has stood now near six hundred years, with all its seeming "imperfections on its head;" yet still braves the most impetuous floods, and seems to triumph in its deformity. The great tower and draw-bridge, which defended the west end, has long since been demolished; a small vestige only remains. By this bridge you enter the citadel, or castle of King John; it is now a gloomy ruin totally dismantled; its dusky towers no longer lift their ponderous battlements in hostility, nor longer seem to frown the citizens into subjection. 1751, part of it was converted into a barrack for infantry, and some new buildings erected, consisting of fifty-four apartments, capable of containing four hundred men.

The streets in general, in the old town, are narrow and dark, a circumstance always occurring in old fortified towns; however, every exertion is now using in order to improve and ventilate the city. Spacious and beautiful quays are built, the houses on which would grace

grace any metropolis in Europe. Of the town wall, little is to be seen; yet those mouldering parts that do remain, indicate considerable strength. Of its seventeen gates, the water-gate of the castle is the only remaining one. There are two other bridges, Baal's and the new bridge; the former of great antiquity. It was scarcely passable till the row of houses on the eastern side were thrown down by order of parliament. The new bridge was finished 1762, consisting of three arches, the centre 41 feet in the span, designed by Mr. Uzuld; the latter connects the old with the new town, called New-town Perry; the streets of which are handsomely laid out, particularly in Bank Place, broad and regular, well-paved, flagged, and exceedingly clean; the shops elegant, and no way inferior to those of Dublin or London. The custom-house is a neat building, in which convenience is studied in preference to beauty. The trade of Limerick is very extensive; the groupes of shipping

which

which cover its quays present ideas, even to a stranger, highly gratifying, arising from the contemplation of wealth crowning the efforts of industry.

The Shannon is navigable from the sea up to Limerick, for ships of 600 tons burthen; and to Poole, about a mile and a half lower, for vessels of 900 tons. Four miles above the city, its navigation meets with interruption, caused by the beautiful falls of Doonass; but by means of a canal, the communication is kept up with Killaloe, by small craft, and from thence is navigable for 150 miles, passing through ten counties, forming grand sheets of water, at different intervals, beautiful in the highest degree. And when the grand canal (approaching it from Dublin) forms a junction at Portumna, there will be a direct communication between the great Western Ocean and Dublin *.

The

* The Shannon rises in the county of Leitrim, and running a few miles, diffuses itself so as to assume the name of

The exchange is a plain substantial building, supported by seven Tuscan columns, and was built on the site of the old one, in 1702. The citizens boast of the honour of being governed by a mayor, previous to London having one. Their first being Adam Sarvant, anno 1198, and London, not till ten years

of Lough Alleyn; issuing from thence with a much fuller stream than it entered; after a progress of several miles, it again expands its waters so as to form Lough Eske; which, though of a considerable length, is not very broad. Passing from thence, it forms another sheet of water, called Lough Ree, fifteen miles long, and five broad. On its exit from this Lough, it appears a large and beautiful river, till breaking forth again between the counties of Tipperary and Clare, it forms Lough Derg, eighteen miles long and four broad. Leaving this, it rolls with a full majestic stream for many miles, and falls at length into the sea, about fifty miles below Limerick, with so vast a body of water, that this also, has been stiled a Lough, though now but simply called the Shannon.—In the mouth, or entrance, it is from seven to eight miles broad.

after. The county court house stands within the old Abbey of St. Francis, outside the eastern walls of the English town ; the church is now the county hospital, and the fine east window conveyed to the church lately built at Newtown Perry.

The cathedral is a venerable old pile : its parts ample, but plain (even to heaviness.) It was founded by that famous builder of abbies and churches, Donald O'Brien, King of Limerick, and dedicated to St. Mary, anno 1180, upon the site of his old palace. There is a degree of solemnity, bordering upon sadness, about this church, which must be attributed to a kind of stupendous simplicity which pervades the whole. The chapter and vestry-room, with the consistorial court, were originally chapels belonging to private families ; and from some remaining parts, seem to have been once handsomely ornamented. Two monuments close to the chapter-room, are highly enriched,

riched, and I believe of an antient date. The east window is large, and of a piece with the general simplicity of the whole. On the north side of the altar, we observed a costly monument of the Earls of Thomond, consisting of three compartments, one above the other, of different kinds of marble; some parts painted, others gilt, forming a motley mass of cumbrous ornaments, pretty much in the barbarous stile of James I. and Elizabeth; yet notwithstanding its tasteless design, it possesses a degree of rude magnificence, congenial with the family to which it was erected.

The intermixture of Grecian ornaments round the altar and communion table, has a wretched effect, and argues both a want of knowledge and taste in the architect; and I am sorry to find it a taste too prevalent even in England. Westminster Abbey, is allowed to abound with specimens of the most exquisite gothic richness, yet there, the high

altar is of Grecian design *; a shameful dereliction from the great original.

The length of the choir is 91 feet, from the altar to the western door, 156; breadth from the north to the south door, 114; circumference of the whole 700 feet. St. Munchin's is situated in the north end of English town, and was founded by St. Munchin (son of Seda) first Bishop of Limerick, anno 651, was rebuilt by the Danes, and continued to be the cathedral church, until the erection of St. Mary's. St. John's is a plain building, its date is not known †.

Friday

* If in a grand edifice of Grecian architecture, we were to see Gothic embellishments introduced, would we not laugh at the absurdity?—then vice versa.

† There were two other churches, one for the Mardyke, called St. Michael's, the other, where the Post Office now stands, dedicated to St. Nicholas; both of which have been thrown down some years since.

There were six religious houses: viz. the convent of St. Peter,

Friday and to-day have been tolerably fine, and we took advantage of every hour. To-morrow morning we shall make an excursion into the country, to see Carrigoguinel. You shall hear from me shortly again. Farewel, and believe me,

Your's, &c.

G. H.

Peter, for Canonesses of St. Augustin, founded by Donald O'Brien, 1171, since known by the name of Peter's cell. A convent of Dominican Friars, dedicated to St. Saviour, founded, 1227, by Donagh Carbrac O'Brien, who was buried in it 1241; this house was erected into an university by Pope Innocent X. Knights Templars, had an house in Quay-lane, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, now used as a methodist meeting house. Priory of St. Augustine, for canons regular, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, St. Edmnnd, and the holy cross, anno 1227, by Simon Mimor. The Conventual Franciscans had an house (which I believe is the present county hospital and court-house.) The Nuns, the order of St. Theresa, have a convent at present on Sir Harry's Mall, of which Mrs. Catharine O'Brien is Abbess.

LETTER VII.

Sunday night, Aug. 20.

DEAR SIR,

WE set off early this morning, and stopped at Mungrest (or Muingharid) a small ruin close to the road side, once a great seminary of learning. The Psalter of Cashel says it was founded by St. Patrick, anno 432, and St. Nessan placed at the head of it. It contained six churches, and the number of its religious increased to fifteen hundred (exclusive of scholars) of whom five hundred were learned preachers, five hundred so classed and divided, as to keep up a perpetual choir day and night, and the remainder being old and feeble,

feeble, applied themselves to charitable offices *.

Cormac M'Culenan, by his will, bequeathed to this college three ounces of gold, an embroidered vest, and his *blessing*.

About three miles further we were struck with the stately ruins of Carrigoguinel castle, proudly elevated upon a rock; its shattered battlements lifted two hundred feet above the level country. Leaving our horses at a cottage hard by, we ascended the rock, not

* Bede tells us, that in the middle of the seventh century, in the days of the venerable prelates, Finian and Colman, many nobles, and other orders of the Anglo Saxons, retired from their own country into Ireland, either for instruction, or an opportunity of living in monasteries of stricter discipline, and that the Scots (as he stiles the Irish) maintained them, taught them, and furnished them with books without fee or reward. "A most honourable testimony," says the elegant Lord Lyttleton, "not only to the learning, but likewise to the hospitality and bounty of that nation."

O'CONNOR'S DISSERTATION.

without some difficulty, from its natural steepness, and from the number of fragments of the ruin, which had rolled down, with large stones scattered about. The summit of the rock was encompassed by a wall of great strength; within which, on a declivity, the ruin stands, a melancholy wreck; yet still it retains a kind of sullen dignity, and infuses in the beholder, a degree of compassion for its fate.

This was one of the strong holds of the O'Briens of Thomond *, a powerful family, who

* Whilst Richard the Second was revelling in Dublin, during his first visit to Ireland; there were invited O'Brien of Thomond, O'Neal of Ulster, O'Connor of Connaught, and Mac Murchad of Leinster, who were made special objects of favour. Being told the King was willing to confer the honour of knighthood upon them, they declared themselves astonished, that he should regard this as any accession to their dignity; it was an honour they had received in their earliest years, and now stood in need of no new

who formerly held the kingdom of Limerick, or North Munster.

From this airy habitation, we descended, and going to the cottage for our horses, were surprized at finding a small table laid, on which were eggs, milk and potatoes. This humble fare was offered to us, with all the kindness of genuine simplicity and good-nature; for although we could not speak their language (native Irish), still we could not mistake the meaning of their eyes, which spoke as much as the most energetic tongue could convey. We partook of their frugal fare, and after expressing our gratitude for

new creation. Every Irish King, said they, makes his son a Knight at seven years old, or in case of death, the next near kinsman. We assemble in a plain. The candidates run with slender lances against a shield erected on a stake. He who breaks the greatest number is distinguished by particular honours annexed to his new dignity. After some entreaties, they were prevailed on to submit to the formalities, and were knighted in the Cathedral of Dublin.

FROISSART.

their

their hospitality, mounted our horses and returned to town, much delighted with our excursion. My dear Sir, we shall leave this to-morrow morning.

Your's, &c.

G. H.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Terbert.

DEAR SIR,

LAST Monday morning we left Limerick, and rode on for Adare. I could not help remarking, with some concern, the far extended pastures occupied with cattle only, which might be so much more advantageously turned to tillage. The soil of this county is of the highest luxuriance, and conveys an appearance of fertility delightful to the eye of the traveller. The corn fields and pasture are agreeably varied by extensive cyder orchards, giving, at a distance, all the effect of

of woodland scenery; and frequently, along the road side, rows of apple-trees cast a cool refreshing shade.

Passing by Patrickswell, we arrived at the romantic little village of Adare, which so fixed our admiration and curiosity, that we resolved to stop the day there.

Nothing can be more serenely beautiful than this little spot. Silent and retired, its inhabitants few, and apparently mixing little with the world; its venerable abbeys and castle, with its surrounding groves, infuse in the beholder a calm sensation of pleasure, truly delightful.

The first view, as we entered, was most striking: on the left, a large ruined castle of the Desmonds' rose from the brink of the river, which flowed into the old fosse. In front, the river Maig glided smoothly under an antique bridge of nine arches; its battlements overhung with ivy nearly to the water edge, the opposite banks swelling into beautiful undulating

dulating lawns, backed by the shady groves and delightful grounds of Sir Richard Quin, through which the turrets and ivied window of a ruined abbey half disclosed themselves. On the right of the village, another monastic ruin lifted its venerable head amidst clustering ivy and elder. Crossing the bridge, we turned to the right, and entered by a low gothic door, into a well inclosed field or park, bounded on the village side by walls, and on the others by deep groves. Here stands the white abbey, founded anno 1315, by John, Earl of Kildare, Son of Thomas*, for

* This Thomas was surnamed Nuppagh, (i. e. the Ape) on the following account: being only nine years old when his father and grandfather were slain by the M'Carties, and nursed at Tralee, whither the news of their deaths suddenly arriving, the nurses who attended, in their first astonishment, ran out of the house, and left the child alone in the cradle, when a baboon or ape, that was kept in the family, took up the infant and carried it to the top of the castle, from whence, after bearing it round the battlements, and shewing it for some time to the astonished spectators, he brought it down

for Augustine Friars. The ivy has over-run this building, and so compleatly mantled it, that the east and southside are totally covered. The cloisters are very perfect, supported by low, slender columns, handsomely ornamented; the whole of marble. The steeple rises to a lofty height, very slender, and tapering to the battlements. The old apartments, courts, &c. strewed with broken ornaments and bones; among which weeds, briers, and thorns, spread themselves, giving a melancholy wildness to the whole. At the extremity of the village, are the ruins of the abbey of Trinitarians, founded for the redemption of Christian captives, by Thomas Fitzgerald, seventh Baron of Offaly, and father to the first earls of Desmond, and Kildare,

down safe and laid it in the cradle. By this accident he was called the Nuppagh; and the Dukes of Leinster being his immediate descendants, continue to bear monkies for their supporters and crest, in grateful remembrance of the said Thomas's preservation.

of

of whom I have before spoken, in the thirteenth century. Of this abbey very little remains except the steeple. After dinner, we left the village to see the third and largest building; it was about five o'clock; the sun was hastening behind the hills, and faintly glowed upon the landscape. We entered the demesne through a low gate on the left of the village: on our approach, we stopped involuntarily to mark the distant appearance of this fine ruin; its ivied steeple and lofty pinnacles, its simple windows and projecting buttresses, shaddowed by a "scattered host of antique trees," and here and there a gilded touch of the departing sun. We entered the north aisle almost with bended knees, deeply impressed with awe and reverence by the melancholy objects around us; the unroofed choir, strewed with the fragments of sculptured warriors and mitred abbots, over which the hemloc and gloomy elder joined. The withered arms of a yew tree, fallen from its aged

aged trunk, lay scattered with the sapless bones of the ancient inhabitants of the place; but above all, the death-like silence which pervaded the whole, aided by the dun hour of evening, rendered it a scene solemn and awful in the highest degree. Observing a deep vaulted apartment, curiosity led us into it; we were imperfectly guided by a faint, greenish light reflected from the walls, yet sufficient for us to distinguish on each side a number of nitches, in which heaps of skulls were regularly piled up.

On some, concretions were beginning to form, from the stalactical exudations above them. The chilling damps were so offensive, that we found it necessary to hurry from this charnel house as quick as possible, into the open air. The small chapels of the choir, contain several mutilated monuments, originally very rich, and exactly resembling some in the white abbey. The cloisters are ruinous, and shaded by waving boughs of wild ash, which

which here take root in the very tops of the walls, and rise in large stems, throwing their branches downwards, mixed with the fantastic arms of an old yew tree. The steeple was struck with lightning, by which it was much shattered. Through the chasm can be seen the old apartments, half choaked with shrubs, ivy, and weeds: the undisturbed habitation of innumerable rooks and daws. The lingering sun was nearly gone:

——"A faint erroneous ray
Glanc'd from th' imperfect surface of things,
Flings half an image on th' straining eye;
While wavering woods, and villages, and streams,
And rocks, and mountain-tops, that long retain'd
Th' ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
Uncertain if beheld. Sudden to Heaven
Thence weary vision turns."

This abbey was founded by Thomas Earl of Kildare, and Joan his wife, anno 1464, for minorets of the observance, and dedicated to St. Francis.

Yesterday morning, having passed through the charming grounds of Sir Richard Quin, Bart. whose refined taste and liberality has considerably assisted to make this little village one of the most interesting objects that the tourist will meet with. He has, at a great expence, enclosed those parts which contain the white abbey, and the abbey of St. Francis, by which they are rescued from the dilapidations of the ignorant multitude; his care is likewise extended to the castle, which is a fine ruin of great extent and strength. From this we entered upon a wild and desolate tract, which for several miles gave no mark of cultivation, or appearance of being inhabited except by wild goats and deer. At length we arrived at Holly Park, the seat of Mr. Taylor, where we observed an extensive plantation of holly, which seems to thrive with uncommon vigour in this wild rocky soil, and forms a forcible contrast with the objects around; immense rocks hem it in on all sides, and

seems

seem intended by Nature as its boundary. It is a melancholy circumstance to view such a space of country totally wild*; for the patches of tillage are so inconsiderable, when compared with the boundless wastes that meet the eye, that they are lost in the comparison. The traveller here may strain his eye over many a hill, yet meet no human residence. Askeaton seems to have suffered the same fate with its lords the Desmonds; for, notwithstanding its original importance, it is now ruinous and neglected. The houses are mostly of stone, and many that are roofless, still retain the appearance of being once

* When Oliver Cromwell obtained possession of Munster, he forced the greatest part of the original inhabitants from their estates (even those who did not bear arms against him) and drove them unprovided into the desolate wastes of Connaught, which had been depopulated by a dreadful pestilence and famine, to such a degree, that his officers declared, during a march of thirty miles, no living creature was seen, not even a bird. This accounts for the want of population in many parts of Munster.

 respectable.

respectable. The castle is a ponderous ruin, built on a rock, and insulated by the Deal, which divides, and passes round it, in its way to the Shannon; above the town it forms some bold and picturesque falls among the rocks, and encreases below the castle considerably; its banks swell into lofty hills, and precipitate cliffs, hanging perpendicularly over the water, which, in its various windings produces a succession of objects singularly wild and romantic. About thirty yards from the castle there is an old bridge of nine arches over the river.

The remains of this fortress evince a prodigious strength, combined with more than ordinary taste in the designer, it is all of an hard grey marble, quarried in the neighbouring hills. During the rebellion of the last Earl of Desmond * in 1580, on the approach of

* After three years of ceaseless warfare, and of variable success, Desmond retired to the woods and fastnesses, (his

of Sir George Carew with the King's forces, it was deserted by the garrison, being weakly provided

(his castles taken or destroyed, his troops scattered and disheartened) attended by a few followers: himself disguised in mean apparel, and in the utmost extremity of distress; two horsemen, and a few kerns, ventured to seize some cattle for their subsistence; but the owner, giving the alarm to a neighbouring military post, they were pursued, and the cattle tracked to a wood, about four miles from Tralee, in which they resolved to lodge. About midnight, they discovered a light not far off, and gathering their party close together, sent one man on to see who were there; he returned, and informed them that there were five or six persons in a ruined house, whereupon they determined to attack them. On entering, they found but one man, of venerable aspect, stretched languidly before a fire. Kelly, of Morierta, assailed and wounded the old man, who faintly exclaimed, "Spare me, I am the Earl of Desmond;" but the savage struck off his head, and carrying it to the Earl of Ormond, it was sent over to the Queen, and impaled upon London Bridge: the body, after eight weeks hiding, was interred in a small chapel near castle island. The family of Morierty are still in disgrace among the

provided to sustain a siege; however, previous to their retreat, they placed a train of gunpowder within the walls, and, setting fire to it, blew up a considerable part of the building.

people for the death of this unfortunate Earl. Thus was a family extinguished, which had flourished for four centuries, in rude splendour and magnificence, and had frequently proved too powerful to be governed. With the possessions of independent princes, and a large army of followers, they were naturally tempted to assume the port of sovereignty unrestrained by a government, which frequently depended on them for support. The lands ferfeited by this Earl, amounted to 574,628 acres, Irish. The Desmonds were always in opposition to the House of Ormond, whose quarrels often deluged the country with blood. In the reign of Elizabeth, Gerald of Desmond, led his army into the territory of Ormond; where, after a desperate conflict, he was defeated, wounded, and taken prisoner. As the Ormondians conveyed him from the field, stretched on a bier, his supporters exclaimed, with a natural triumph, "Where is now the great Lord of Desmond?" The wounded chief, with energy returned, "Where, but in his proper place: *on the necks of the Butlers!*"

About

About half a mile from the village, on the banks of the river, are the remains of the Abbey of Askeaton, founded by James VII. Earl of Desmond, anno 1420, for friars minorets; the west is washed by the Deal, which rises with the tide seven feet up the walls. This noble ruin is composed entirely of black marble, many parts richly ornamented, particularly the cloisters, the square arcade of which comprehends about 160 feet; in the centre is an aged yew tree, surrounded by tombs and broken flags, but no legible inscriptions. In this place the priest celebrates mass to a numerous congregation, unprotected from the inclemency of the weather; a circumstance which denotes either extreme poverty, or what is stronger, ancient prejudice in favour of this venerated spot; for they frequently walk six or seven miles to this abbey, to hear mass and go home again. Many parts of the cloisters are exquisitely polished by the accidental friction of the cloathes of such as pass to and fro.

On leaving Askeaton, the appearance of cultivation increased; the hills still continued lofty, but streaked with tillage, and enlivened by population. As we descended from the region of mountains, the Shannon once more spread its ample bosom to our view, winding in many a noble curve, sometimes beneath a swelling mountain wooded to the water's edge, sometimes in verdant meadows sloping to the wave; its numerous creeks filled with fishermens' cots; its rocky promontaries, and receding lays, with the smoaking hamlets scattered up the mountain side, presented a picture to us, delightful as it was novel, and rendered particularly striking by the quick transition from the rugged tract of mountain behind us. From an eminence we observed the windings of the river almost up to Limerick, and downwards nearly to the Western Ocean, an uninterrupted line of sixty miles. The road continued along the strand, under the high grounds, till we reached the village of Glin, which stands by a small romantic bay

bay, surrounded by hills and broken cliffs. Here we found the shell of an old castle, formerly the seat of the knights of the Glin,* a branch of the Desmond family. It was besieged by Sir George Carew, anno 1600, who encamped between it and the Shannon. The knight of Glin came to the camp with a flag of truce, but refusing the terms offered him, was commanded to depart. The bombardment began, when the knight's son, who had been detained as an hostage, was placed in the front of the breast-works, in order to terrify the besieged; notwithstanding which, the constable of the castle declared he would point his guns against the camp. A breach

* John of Callan, in Kerry, ancestor to the Fitzgeralds of Munster, was slain at Callan, with his third son Maurice, by the M'Carties. His eldest son was Gibbon, ancestor to the White Knight, otherwise styled Clangibbon; the second was John, ancestor to the Knight of the Glin, or Valley; the third, slain with his father, was the first knight of Kerry; and the fourth, Thomas, was progenitor to divers families of the Fitzgeralds in Kerry and Limerick.

was

was made under the hall of the castle, and Captain Flower commanded to enter, supported by Captain Slingsby: they gained the first flight of stairs, where the constable was slain in its defence. Here they remained all night, and next morning they gained the tower, on which the garrison retreated to the battlements, where most of them were put to the sword.*

Glin House the residence of Mr. Fitzgerald, knight of Glin, is finely situated on the rise of the hill, overlooking the village. After crossing a small stream, which bounds the county of Limerick, we entered Kerry. Tarbert is the first village, and close to the boundary; it is the estate and manor of Sir Edward Leslie, Bart. whose house is delightfully seated upon a woody promontory, commanding an extensive view up and down the Shannon, where it is rendered one half narrower by being confined by a point of land on the

* Pacata Hibernia, p. 66.

county

county of Clare, by the side of the river. Beyond the demesne the land stretches out into a peninsula, insulated at high water. On this neck of land there are two forts to defend the passage, and on an eminence behind there is one which commands the two. We were enabled to stroll along the shore underneath the woods, as the tide was low. There are great depredations committed by the turbulence of the river, which runs dreadfully violent when agitated by an east or north-east wind; the timber lies scattered along the skirt of the wood, torn from their roots, and innumerable stumps appear, which have yielded their majestic trunks to the superior strength of their watry opponent. It is a pity to see neglect so sadly marked in this beautiful spot, which contains every feature necessary to fascinate the heart; the house appears impaired; the woods decaying through want of care, and the whole apparently tenantless. The soil here is rich and fertile, but by no means so well

well cultivated as it might be: vast herds of black cattle cover these luxuriant tracts, and afford the chief article of exportation.

Adieu, my dear Sir,

and believe me

Yours, &c.

Wednesday Night. G. H.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Caſtleiſland, Saturday, Auguſt 26.

DEAR SIR,

ON Thursday morning, having a cold dinner packed up, we got on board a small row-boat, which took us down to deep water, where our smack awaited us, alongside of two gun boats, each carrying one twenty-four pounder.

Passing under the batteries, we had an opportunity of observing them closely. They lay about two miles from the town; the two lower mount eight twenty-four and one six pounder; the upper one, four twenty-four pounders, containing 300 men. The river here is about two miles and a half broad, but the

the channel runs within range of the guns. I cannot think them of any utility, except for the defence of vessels lying at anchor, against the attempts of privateers; on the land side they are not tenable, being commanded by high grounds. After a pleasant zig zag sail of five miles, we landed at Inniscathy (commonly called Scattery Island) celebrated in antiquity for its religious foundations; it comprehends about 100 acres; the soil good; well stocked with cattle, and abounding with rabbits and wild fowl. There are one or two cabbins on it, the inhabitants of which I am told, manufacture the wool from the sheeps back: dye, spin, and weave it into cloathes for themselves. This was the see of a bishop, supposed to have been founded by St. Patrick, in the fifth century, who governed it some time himself; he was succeeded by St. Senan, a man of much piety and learning; he received the monastic habit from the abbot Casidanus, and was afterwards a disciple to

Natalia.

Natalis, abbot of Kilmanach, in Ossory, and then to St. David, of Minevia, in Wales*. Returning to Ireland, he founded many monasteries in Munster, and at last fixed his seat here; he died March 1, anno 544, and was buried in his own church. There are the remains of seven monastic buildings, with a round tower 120 feet high, split by lightning from top to bottom (yet perfectly perpendicular) having been so as long as the oldest person can remember. This see was united to Limerick, about the twelfth century, but according to archbishop Usher, the possessions of it were divided between the sees of Limerick, Killaloe, and Ardfert.

In the year 975, Brien Boroimhe, at the head of 1200 Dalgais troops, with Domhnall, king of Jonmhuinein, recovered this island from the Danes, defeating Jomhar, and his sons Amhlaibh and Duibheheann, with the

* Ware's Antiquities of Ireland.

† Annals of Munster, Act 88, page 542.

destruction

destruction of 800 of the enemy†. Elizabeth granted this abbey, with twenty-four acres of land, an house and castle in the island, to the Mayor and citizens of Limerick, and their successors for ever, at the annual rent of 3l. 12s. 8d.; also, ten cottages, one church in ruins, twenty acres of wood and stony ground, in the said island, called Beachwood, with all the tithes and the several customs following: from every boat of oysters coming to the city of Limerick once a year, a thousand oysters; from every herring-boat, once a year, five hundred herrings.* Re-embarking, we sailed down towards Ray-head and Beale sand-banks; at the mouth of the river, the expanse of water is noble, being nearly eight miles in length. In 1796, while the French fleet lay in Bantry Bay, two large ships of war anchored under Ray-head, and sent their boats for provisions to the neighbouring country, for which they paid quietly.

* Arbhdall's Monasticon Hibernicum, p. 51.

Opposite

Opposite to Inniscathy is the island of Carrigfoile, close to the shore, with its strong castle, formerly the seat of O'Connor Kerry; (so named to distinguish him from O'Connor Sligo) it was defended on the land side by double walls; the outer having square flankers, and the inward round bastions.

In 1580, this castle was besieged by the Lord Justice. Julio, an Italian, commanded the garrison, which consisted of nineteen Spaniards and fifty Irish. It was battered with three pieces of ordinance; one culverin, and a demi-culverin. A breach being made, it was mounted by Captain Macworth, who stormed the castle, putting fifty to the sword, besides six who were hanged. Julio was preserved a few days, but suffered the same fate as his unfortunate companions.

Friday morning we left Tubert, and rode on to visit the round Friery of Lislaghtin founded by O'Conner, 1478, for Observan-

tine Franciscans, of the strict order *. It has been a magnificent building, but unfortunately, not having the same protection which preserves the Abbies of Adare, it is falling fast to decay; the cloisters are totally gone, from which numerous newly erected tombs and vaults have been built. The soil hereabouts is deep and marshy in winter, yet trees flourish in it with great luxuriance, and in summer abounds with rich pasture. The in-

* This Friery was granted in fee to James Scolls, at the yearly crown rent of 3l. 16s. 8d. who assigned his interest in the same to Thomas Law; but they neglecting to pay the said rent, the premises were seized by the crown, being twelve acres of land; and the collector of the county not being able to let the land for the yearly value of the said rent, the premises became greatly in arrear, and were set up at auction, and were sold for forty shillings per annum; which lease being expired, Henry Rose, of the city of Dublin, Esq. having lands contiguous, proposed to give four pounds a year for it, and had a lease of ninety-nine years of it at that rent.

SMITH'S HISTORY OF KERRY, P. 227.

habitants

habitants are supplied with limestone, by water, from Limerick, and send their goods at a very cheap rate to market, though at the distance of fifty miles. Tillage is quite neglected; black cattle for dairies, and beef for exportation, being mostly regarded *. From this we continued along the shore, passing the pleasant seats of Asdee and Littur.

The ruins of Beale castle are delightfully seated near the mouth of the river, commanding an unbounded prospect; it belonged to Patrick Lord Kerry, who demolished the fortifications in the year 1600; he died soon after of grief, at seeing his chief seat of Lixnaw in possession of the English. In this castle, the valiant Maurice Stack, a Kerry man in the service of the English government, was murdered. Being invited by Lord Kerry's lady to dine with her, in the absence of her Lord, when dinner was over she begged to speak to him privately in her own

* Smith's History of Kerry.

chamber; when, after some conversation, she cried out to some ruffians, then behind the door, "do not you hear him abuse me?" On which they rushed in, slew him, and threw his body out of the window into the court-yard. Some say this lady was herself the chief agent in this barbarous act. The cliffs here rise to an amazing height: one, two, and three hundred feet perpendicular. The castle of Lick stands upon a rock almost surrounded by the sea, communicating formerly with the land by a drawbridge; it belonged to a branch of the Desmond family. Near this is the castle of Dune, situated similar, overhanging the ocean. Some years back, a part of these cliffs (between the castles of Lick and Dune) assumed a volcanic appearance; the waves by continual dashing had worn and undermined the cliff, which giving way, fell with tremendous violence into the sea; several great strata, or beds of pyritæ, iron, and sulphur, were in consequence exposed to the action of the air, and

salt

salt water; the natural effects of which were, that they heated and burnt with great fierceness; the clay near it is calcined to a red brick, mixed with iron ore, melted in many places, like cinders thrown from a Smith's forge. Many who did not consider well the causes and the effects naturally to be expected from them, have supposed this to be volcanic *.

* Mr. Tournfort, in his voyage to the Levant, inform us "that in the island of Milo, in the Archipelago, the iron mines that are found there, and from whence a certain tract of land takes the denomination of St. John de Fer, maintain perpetual fires; and he thus reasons upon this phænomenon: "It is certain," says he, "that filings of iron, steeped in common water, will grow considerably warm, and much more so in sea water; and if you mingle them with some sulphur, pounded, you will see this mixture really burn some time after it is moistened. It is therefore probable, that the fires which are constantly felt in this island, are solely occasioned by a fermentation of a femiginous matter mixed with sulphur, which no place in that island is without; and these materials are heated by being drenched in sea-water, which runs through all parts of the spungy rock." So, in like manner, may the fire be accounted for in the cliff.

From this we rode through an uninteresting country, towards Listowel; within a mile and a half of which we crossed the river Gale, (or Galy) over an handsome bridge of three arches. Listowel is pleasantly seated upon the river Feale, not far from the confluence of the rivers Brick, Gale, and Feale; which, when united, empty themselves into the mouth of the Shannon, under the name of the Cashen.

This castle was the last which held out for Lord Kerry against Queen Elizabeth. Nov. 1600. Sir Charles Wilmot besieged it; as a chamber was preparing to place the powder in to blow it up, a spring of water gushed out in such abundance, that it obliged him to begin a new work, which he carried under ground, to the midst of a vault in the castle. The work being perceived by the garrison, they surrendered; nine of the English soldiers being killed in the siege, Sir Charles ordered the like number of the garrison to be instantly hung; the remainder of the prisoners

prisoners were shortly after put to death, except Sir Dermot M'Brodie, a priest, who was pardoned for the following reason: On the castle's surrendering, Lord Kerry's eldest son, then but five years old, was carried away by an old woman, almost naked, and besmeared with dirt; Wilmot detached a party in search of him, who returned without finding the child; but the priest proposed, if Sir Charles would spare his life, and that of the child, to discover where he was; which being granted, he went with a captain's guard to a thick wood, six miles from the castle, which was almost impassable; where, in an hollow cave, they found the old woman and the child, whom they brought to Sir Charles, who sent both the priest and the child to the Lord President *. Of this great castle there now remains but the gate-house, flanked by two immense round towers; it stands finely elevated upon a steep bank, overlooking the

* Smith's History of Kerry, p. 287.

Feale; and in those days of warfare, was vulnerable only on the village side.

This morning, having consulted with our host, concerning the road, we adopted his advice, and determined on exploring Stack's mountains. Having crossed a fine bridge, of eleven arches over the Feale, and finding a kind of foot-path, we jogged on merrily, until the track became uncertain; by degrees we found ourselves environed by lofty hills, whose dreary summits broke the impendent clouds, and sent such a torrent from their watery store, as completely drenched us through; however, there was no alternative, so we were obliged to push on through this desolate tract.

We now had no guide, but the supposed situation of the country; all traces of a path were gone; cultivation seemed to have fled, or rather never to have appeared. Mountain rose above mountain, obtruding, each, its discouraging head; at last, by a sudden turning, we observed a cabin near us, which we

we joyfully approached; it looked like a speck in the boundless ocean, being the only solitary habitation, for many miles, through these mountains. Here we found only two children, one nursing the other; the youngest was about one year old, and the eldest seven; she could not speak English, but shewed a second room, wherein we lodged our horses. I never saw Nature in her native garb so truly marked, as in this child; she was rather handsome, with very intelligent eyes, which probably were rendered more speaking, from her inability to make herself understood by her tongue. Every object around us seemed indigenous to the soil; even the mountain cow and horse*; the aborigines of the county,

* These small horses are the properest to travel through this county with; a man must entirely abandon himself to their guidance, which will answer much better than if one should strive to manage and direct their footsteps. They are naturally sure-footed, and though small, an excellent breed; they climb over the most rugged rocks, and both ascend and descend the steepest precipices with great facility and

county, gave a marked and peculiar character to the spot. We gave the little girl a few halfpence, but she seemed unacquainted with their uses. Shortly after, the father and mother returned, carrying fuel from the neighbouring bog; they both spoke a little English, and, as well as they could, directed us to the path, which it seems we had lost, by a considerable way.

The clouds having expended their ammunition, we again set forward, winding round

and safety; are so light, as to skim over waving bogs and morasses without sinking, and where heavier would certainly perish. They are strong and durable, easily supported, and not ill-shaped; so hardy as to stand abroad all winter, and will brouze upon heath, furze, and other shrubs; add to this, their gait is ambling, which is extremely easy.

SMITH'S HISTORY OF KERRY, P. 109.

Sir James Ware observes, that these kind of horses were formerly called asturiones; as having been originally imported from the Asturias in Spain, into this kingdom, where they are now become rare, except in these mountainous parts; a large breed of cattle being more useful in the plain champain parts of it.

one

one hill, rising another, anxiously looking for the wished for road; at length, we found what we conjectured to be it, a rugged pathway, interrupted by bogs and holes. Fatigued with past disappointments, and bewildered with doubts as to the true course we were taking, we still persevered, hoping, as we ascended each hill, that it might terminate our journey. The day again began to lower and threaten, which conjured up within us a thousand dismal ideas of being benighted in these unhospitable regions.

The path frequently sunk underneath our horses feet, against which, nothing but the most painful watchfulness could provide. About five o'clock, the setting sun became visible, and the clouds, gradually dispersing, gave no farther sign of molestation. Shortly after, between two opening hills, we descried, at a distance, a promontory running out into the Atlantic, which, by consulting my map, we founded to be Tralee head and bay.

This

This gave us new life; so urging briskly to the rising of a hill, we had the pleasure of seeing before us the low country, stretching into a far extended fertile vale, with the village of Castle Island, cheering us with a thousand comforts, which the tired traveller never fails to anticipate. However, before we reached the village we encountered another torrent of rain *.

We were very much disappointed in our ideas of Castle Island, formerly called the

* These parts, like most other high and mountainous countries, are liable to great quantities of rain; especially, as the sea lies to the S. and S. W. of them; for, according to the ingenious calculation of Dr. Hally, the sea alone affords more vapours, than almost tripple the quantity of water, emptied into it by all the rivers. Thus, a wind from the sea is moister than from the land; and hence it is, that during the continuation of our S. W. winds, so great a number of days are wet; for those winds coming sweeping along the vast Atlantic ocean, must lick up prodigious quantities of vapour from that immense expanse of waters.

Castle

Castle of the Island of Kerry; it is wild, poor and neglected, without any trade whatsoever, and, I believe, totally supported by the passage of travellers to Tralee, the assizes, town, and visitors to the lake of Killarney; still, it has many remains of its ancient population. The assizes were originally held here, but since their removal to Tralee, this village has gradually sunk into decay. The town-house is roofless; it was once a respectable building; the front forms an arcade, within which is a row of Tuscan columns; the barracks are large, and in tolerable repair, but uninhabited; the ruins of the castle are extensive, and shew that it has been a place of great strength and consequence: the river Mang, here an inconsiderable stream, runs round the walls, and forms a dyke, over which were drawbridges, defended by port-callices, &c. &c. In the year 1345, it was taken by Sir Ralph Ufford, Lord Justice of Ireland; being held by Sir Eustace le Poer,

Sir

Sir William Grant, and Sir John Cotterel, for Maurice Fitz Thomas Fitzgerald, First Earl of Desmond. By the death and forfeiture of Gerald, the sixteenth Earl of Desmond, the family of Herbert had a grant of this seignory. The castle is said to be built by Geffiy de Mariscis, Lord Justice of Ireland, anno, 1226 a man of the greatest power in this country; "however, he fell under the king's displeasure; (Henry the Third) was banished from Ireland; driven with execration from England into France, where he died pitifully, yet not to be pitied. His son William was odious to the King, and lived in the Isle of Lundee, near Bristol, a pirate and despoiler, but was brought from thence to London and executed *." The church has a respectable appearance, not from its present situation, but from what it was in its days of prosperity; it now stands apparently neglected. Near this is found the

* Sir James Ware.

lapis

lapis Hibernicus anthorum, (Irish slate) its taste is very sour, and contains a large portion of a martial vitriol.

This county abounds with various kinds of marble* and valuable stones, particularly amethysts, which are found in the cliffs at Kerry-head; they are of a chrystalliform figure,

* That near Tralee, black and white, of a different colour and texture from that found near Kilkenny; the white spots larger, and the black approaching to a blue tint, full of a sparry matter, running irregularly through its substance, is raised in blocks of a large size, and takes a fine polish. At Ballybeggan, a marble similar, but not susceptible of so fine a polish.

At Castlemain, a black and white marble, of the same nature.

Castle Island contains a variegated species.

In the island of Dunkerron in the river of Kenmare, some black and white, others purple and white, intermixed with yellow spots; likewise a very beautiful kind of a purple, veined with dark green.

The intire of the middle island of the Skeligs is composed of a red marble.

and

and are found in the fissures of the rock, adhering by their bases. They vary in colour from a pale rose, through different shades of purple and violet tint, and sometimes are colourless; particularly such as are called, by jewellers, the female *.

Adieu, my dear Sir, we intend leaving this to-morrow morning, for Killarny, from whence you shall hear from me soon.

Your's, &c.

G. H.

* The mass, or constituent matter of all precious stones, is a pelucid crystalline substance, which is of different degrees of hardness from that of the diamond, to that of the meerest shattery crystal; and they have their various colours from different metals. Thus, when lead was mixed with the crystalline matter at the time of their formation, the stone became a topaz; or, as the ancients called it, a chrysolite; when lead and iron thus entered the composition, the stone became an hyacinth; when iron alone, the ruby granates; also the amethyst, and other red gems; when copper, dissolved by acids, entered the composition, the emerald was produced; and the same metal dissolved by alkalies, coloured the sapphire; and so of the rest."

SMITH'S HISTORY OF KERRY, p. 404.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Killarny, Tuesday night, August 29.

DEAR SIR,

WE were detained at Castle Island by heavy rains, the whole of Sunday; however, Monday brought fair weather, and we betook ourselves to the road, not without some apprehensions, from information which we had received of the fords being swelled, through which we must necessarily pass; in this we were agreeably disappointed; the brooks were all fordable, with no great difficulty. Along the road, we had in view the immense mountains of the lakes, which afforded a boundless scope for fancy; their

fantastical and rugged heads forming a thousand strange contrasts; every five minutes changed their appearance, according as mists would break, or clouds enwrap them; distant gleams of light would dart across their summits, and quickly vanish; then would succeed a thick and blackish vapour hanging on their gloomy sides, till it was again displaced by a blaze of sunshine. Thus were we entertained, till on our near approach to Killarny, the wide expanding bosom of the lower lake burst at once upon our expectant eyes; and here no one can pass without a pause; it deserves it; nay, it requires it: for the eye naturally seeks for repose, as well as the grosser parts of our system after exertion; too numerous a succession of objects will fatigue the sight, and baffle reflection; they require digestion; and when it is interrupted, confusion must arise, and the last object will erase from the mind the image of the first. After a pleasing kind of tumult of the

To face page 118

Ross Castle

the mind had subsided, occasioned by the first impression made upon us by this magnificent scene, we moved slowly on, descending by Lord Kenmare's deer park wall, into the town of Killarny. It is exceedingly neat and clean, and thriving fast, both from the great encouragement given by Lord Kenmare to settlers, and from the prodigious influx of visitors to the lakes; the houses in general are good, and an appearance of comfort pervades the whole. His Lordship's house adjoins the town, and the beautiful gardens spread themselves to the edge of the lake, finely planted, and preserved with care.

This morning we prepared for an excursion on the lakes. The boats are stationed at Ross Island, about a mile and a half from town; it is rather a peninsula, being separated from the main land only by a cut through a morass, over which there is a bridge.

Ross castle stands on this island, formerly the seat of O'Donoghoe Ross, one of the

most ancient families in this county. It lies close to the water side, beautifully backed by wood, which covers almost the whole of the island; the banks, in most places, are hid by thick and hanging foliage. The castle is now in tolerable repair, having a garrison, with a governor appointed for it, upon the establishment. In the year 1641, it was held by Lord Muskerry, against the English, commanded by Ludlow, with Lord Broghil and Sir Hardress Waller, who besieged it with four thousand infantry, and two hundred cavalry; it was surrendered upon capitulation. Having embarked, and taken on board two men with horns, and two small pieces of cannon, we stretched across the lower lake, to the base of Glenaá mountain, where we deposited our provisions in the cottage; and shaping our course towards the upper lake, we entered between the two mountains of Glenaá and Turc, a narrow canal, or river, which issues from the upper to the

the lower lake. Here the most wildly diversified scenery unfolds itself, that the enthusiastic imagination can conceive. The rugged and precipitate base of Turk, contrasted with the opposite richly wooded sides of Glenaá, whose romantic groves, falling to the waves, cast a deep and solemn shade around; whilst on the other side, rock piled on rock, flung in wild confusion along the banks, covered with crawling ivy, and from their interstices, bursting numerous shrubs, in flower, and bearing fruit; quickly the scene would change; the mountains retire suddenly and leave us in a plain, of perhaps three hundred yards in breadth; the green lawn spotted with groups of oak, holly, and wild ash; again the hills approach, and environ us with dark precipices and nodding woods; awhile the course seems lost, we are suspended in doubt; till turning short, we penetrate a deep and gloomy shade, hid from the blaze of day by the umbrageons arms of the trees, which, interwoven together, form an imperious canopy. Once more we are

launched into an amphitheatre of lofty rocks, clad with countless shrubs and forest trees, which, shooting from their bare sides, send forth their twisting roots towards the earth*. Arriving underneath the Eagle rock, we stopped, and, landing on the opposite bank, stood lost in admiration not unmixed with terror.

Its sublime height, girt with a waving forest, whose aspiring trees lift their tall shade high amongst the craggy eminences, the haunt of eagles and various birds of prey; at its base, the tremulous wave reflected all again with varied beauty. But how can I describe the wonders of its many echoes, which, on the explosion of the cannon, burst with tenfold magnitude from its rugged cliffs, rolling with majestic horror round the neighbouring

* It frequently occurs, that in the extent of fifty yards, one will meet with twenty different kinds of trees, all flourishing, particularly the arbutus; and, among the whole, perhaps, one cart load of earth could not be collected. The roots force themselves through the interstices of the rocks, twining round their bases, and seem to be in search of soil.

hills

hills, each seeming to repel the thunder as it comes, till by reiterated peals, it sinks into hollow murmurs among the distant hills, and is for a few moments lost; but, from the silent pause, the distant sound again strikes faintly on the ear, and by degrees, with collected force, grows louder, till at last it faintly dies away to utter silence.

Just at this awful period, the bugle horn sounded, and there issued from the grots and steep recesses of the mountain, innumerable sounds, like celestial voices, diffusing inexpressible pleasure, each wood and rocky dell prolonging the notes, which, floating on the agitated air, fell behind the hills, and mingled into one grand chord of most angelic harmony, that like

"A solemn breathing sound,
Rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes, that stole upon the air,
That even silence was took ere she was aware,
And wish'd she might deny her nature, and be never more;
Still to be so displaced."

From

From this enchanting spot we proceeded on to the old Wier bridge, a rude and picturesque object where quitting the boat, we betook ourselves to the bank, whilst the boatmen prepared to drag the boat through a fall of water, which passes with great impetuosity under the arch; through it they conveyed ropes to the other side, and, with the most painful exertions, pulled it up through the fall into the higher stream, which is elevated about ten or fifteen feet. Thus continuing our course, we at length entered the upper lake through a narrow channel formed by two projecting cliffs, called Colman's Eye. This lake is surrounded by mountains of a fearful height, fringed with forests, which creep up their sides to various distances. From the glassy surface, emerge huge rocks, crowned with arbutus,* displaying its

* The arbutus is not to be found any where of spontaneous growth, nearer to Ireland, than the most southern part of France, Italy, and Sicily; and there too, it is never known

its bright green leaves of gayest verdure, blended with its scarlet fruit and snowy blossoms. Some immense islands lift their bare and craggy summits high above others, from whose fantastical shapes the boatmen have named them, one, the man of war, another, the church, and so on, according as there is an assimilation. The shores are mostly bold and steep, abounding with the most surprizing variety of shrubs and plants.

known, but as a frutex or shrub; whereas, in the rock parts of the County of Kerry, about Lough Lane (Killarny), and in some of the rocky mountains adjacent, where the people of the country call it the cane apple, it flourishes naturally to that degree as to become a large tall tree. Petrus Bellonius observes, that it doth so on Mount Athos in Macedonia; and Juba is quoted by Pliny as mentioning it as a thing extraordinary, that the Arbutus grows to an high tree in Arabia.

SIR THOMAS MOLLYNEUX, PH. TRANSACTIONS, NO. 227.

It abounded in these parts to such a degree, that it has been cut down for fuel, to melt and refine the ore of silver and lead, discovered near Ross Castle.

Here

Here spring the living herbs profusely wild
O'er all the green deep earth, beyond the power
Of Botanist to number up their tribes;
Whether he steals along the lonely dale
In silent search, or climbs the mountain rock,
Fired by the nodding verdure of the brow,
With such a liberal hand hath nature flung
Their seeds abroad, blown them about in winds
Innumerous, mix'd them in the nursing mold.

At the farthest extremity of the lake arose M'Gillycuddy's Rocks*; its many pointed head immersed in mists and storms; along its prodigious furrows we could distinctly trace the cataracts, swollen by recent rains, tumbling with fury, and glistening like liquid silver. In a little time we observed its forky summit pierce through the clouds, and the grey mists slow descending, like a great curtain, half way down, through which the Sun darted his rays, partially illumining its huge side and base. We landed on Romans' Island, where

* Named from a family of great note in these parts, a branch of which still remains.

we found a small cabin, built by the person from whom the island takes its name: he was a singular character, and retired here to enjoy the pleasures of his rod and gun. It is finely situated, commanding a delightful prospect of the circumjacent hills, with the numerous islands scattered over the lake. Embarking again, we crossed to the shore, and wound round the woody promontories of those stupendous mountains, proceeding to the very extremity. We approached the rocks as near as the land would permit, but all was involved in shadows, clouds and darkness; we could scarce see upwards an hundred feet.

We now bent our course homeward; passing again through Colman's Eye, we entered the beautiful canal, or passage to the lower lake. When we arrived within a quarter of a mile of the old Weir bridge, we felt ourselves gently urged on by the current; the boatmen drew in their oars, and we committed ourselves to the guidance of the stream; trimming

ming the boat well, and observing our balance, we found ourselves hurried on towards the arch with encreased velocity; till, with the torrent, we were swept through the arch and down the fall, with a force that must alarm any person looking at us from the bank. As we approached it, the boatmen mentioned an accident having happened to a boat, which was broken to atoms down the fall, by not having sufficient water to carry it clear over the rocks, which by no means tended to quiet my fears for our own fate; however, we had a fine sweep of water, and were launched pleasantly into the lower stream. On our arrival at Glenaá cottage, we found a comfortable dinner ready for us, attended by every thing which could heighten enjoyment. About six o'clock we got on board, and winding round the fanciful shore which separates Mucruss lake from the lower, we returned to Ross Castle.

Yours, &c. G. H.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

30th Aug. Wednesday Evening.

DEAR SIR,

THIS morning we were resolved to change the scene; so, mounting our horses, we rode through Lord Kenmore's deer park, and on by Mr. Cronyer's grounds, which are charmingly situated, from which a most extensive view of the lake and Lord Kenmare's gardens are to be seen. Passing through a large wood of gigantic oak, admirably preserved, we descended from the high grounds by the winding flesk, and rode on to Mucruss, the seat of Mr. Herbert. It lies towards the southern side of the lake, on a peninsula, where

where nature, slightly aided by art, outdoes every thing that fancy, supported with highest expence, has ever yet performed. The native attire of this spot, before it was adorned by any improvements, was that of a luxuriant garden, where trees and shrubs, the produce only of a more favourable clime, flourished indigenous. The arbus, sorbus, juniper, and various other beautiful shrubs spread their luxuriant branches through a variety of forest trees, and even rise from the crevices of vast rocks of marble, without any apparent aid from the soil. There frequently may be met different trees growing from one stem. One may see an ash, oak, birch, and hazel, so united in the trunk of an old holly, that they all appear to draw their existence from it. However, these sports of nature may be easily accounted for, by birds carrying the seeds of trees and dropping them into a mouldering trunk, or wafted by the wind into crevices of the rocks, there join and incorporate themselves together

as

as they grow upwards. These natural gardens, therefore, required but little assistance, except an inclosure on the land side, and cutting away the superfluities in order to form walks, &c. besides the addition of such exotics as might tend to heighten the scene. Amongst the lofty marble cliffs, which burst in many places through the trees, I observed luxuriant vines, twining over their variegated sides, and rising in arbours above their summits. These were, probably, planted by the monks of the neighbouring abbey, formerly called Irralagh (i. e. on the lake) the ruins of which stand in these delightful gardens, embosomed in tall and venerable trees. It was founded by Donald, the son of Thady M'Carty, anno 1440, for minorities or conventual franciscans, and dedicated to the Holy Trinity. It was repaired by him 1468, the year he died, and again re-edified in 1602, but soon after fell to decay.

The

The steeple is much ruined, but most other parts are very intire, particularly four cloisters; from the centre of which rises a yew tree of surprizing growth, to the height of sixty feet, throwing its dark branches down upon the surrounding walls of the cloisters, forming a vast canopy, impervious to the most piercing rays of the sun. Many dark passages and apartments are fitted with broken ornaments, and unusual heaps of bones. In the choir is a neat monument erected to the memory of the late Mrs. Galway of Killarny; the inscription elegant and feeling. This is still the cemetery of the M'Carty Mores*, and has been so from its first foundation. On the outside we were

* More signifies great; and when attached to names, denotes them to be the head or leader of their sept or family. The chief families in this county, of Irish blood, are M'Carty More, O'Sullivan More, with O'Donoghoe, Ross, and M'Gillycuddy. The M'Carties had originally the whole of the country under their dominion.

struck

struck with the appearance of a perfect Golgotha—a pile of human skulls beyond our calculation, occupying a space of twenty feet in length, and fourteen in height, so cemented together, with moss and other vegetable matter, that it is difficult to separate them from each other. This is probably a sad memorial of some ancient and bloody conflict between the turbulent chiefs of these mountains. The view from this peninsula, in front, comprehends the whole of the lower lake; an extent of eight miles in length, and four across to the opposite shores. On the left it takes in Mucruss, or Turk Lake, with its numerous islands, backed with the stupendous mountain of Mangerton. On the right it is beautifully contrasted; a fine fertile country, varied by gentle undulations, skirting the eastern side of the lower lake. Nor has Nature stopped her bounteous hand, after cloathing the surface with her choicest ornature; but even the bowels of the earth are stored with minerals. As for copper, few mines in Europe have pro-

duced so great a quantity of ore in a given space, as this has done. It fell into the hands of a Bristol company some years ago. It is now but inconsiderable*.

These hills abound with lead †, but particularly with iron. There have been likewise specimens of tin found. Nennius, who wrote

* This mine, in the space of a year after its working, afforded 375 tons of ore, which produces from an ounce of the general sample, five penny-weights, eight grains of copper; being considerably more than a fourth part of pure metal, of a very fine quality; and the Bristol company, to whom the proprietors of this work sold it, must have extracted a greater proportion of copper; as it is well known from the laws of attraction, that a large portion of ore will yield more on the assay, in proportion, than a small quantity.

† Lead ore from the barony of Glanerought, which contained $\frac{70}{1000}$ parts of silver in each ounce of lead, which is no inconsiderable quantity. It has been known, that the Dutch have formerly given a considerable price for Irish lead, in order to extract the silver contained therein; which, by the unskilfulness of our refiners, was left behind; and that they have sold the same lead cheaper than they bought it, whereby they gained a considerable profit.

SMITH'S HISTORY OF KERRY, p. 411.

in

in the ninth century, and which Mr. O'Flaherty, in his Ogygia Citis, makes mention of them.

Momonia stagnum, Lochlenius undique zonis
Quatuor ambitur: prior est exære, secunda
Plumbea, de rigido conflatur tirtia ferro:
Quarta renidenti palliscit linea stanno.

Loughland, in Munster, four great zones surround,
With copper first, and next with lead 'tis bound;
A third of iron, both these mines inclose;
Pale tin, the fourth, doth next environ those.

O'Flaherty also takes notice of pearls having been found in the lake, "but because of the great depth of the Lough, they are not so frequently found in it as in the river Lane, which runs out of it." Sir James Ware speaks of an Irish pearl being presented by the bishop of Limerick, to Anselin, archbishop of Canterbury, anno 1094. Many of our pearls are of a pale and dusky colour; yet some that have been found in the northern parts of the king-

dom, are of a beautiful colour, and valued at eighty pounds sterling.

I do not think we shall leave this for five or six days; so it is more than probable you will have another letter from the lakes. I shall conclude with the much admired Dr. Berkley's words, who, on his being asked his opinion of Mucruss, answered, that "The French monarch might possibly be able to erect another Versailles, but could not, with all his revenues, lay out another Mucruss."

Adieu, my dear Sir, and believe me,

Your's, &c.

G. H.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Killarny, Friday Night, Sept. 1st.

DEAR SIR,

THE countless objects which deservedly claim our attention, and frequently distract our choice, would require months to visit and admire. We have endeavoured to contrast our excursions, by enjoying its terrene and aqueous beauties alternately. Yesterday we got on board, and crossed from Ross Castle to Innisfallen, the most pleasing island on the lower lake. It is entirely covered with forest and fruit trees, intermingled with shrubs and evergreens. Its shores, varied by cliffs and hanging trees, affording many small and

shady bays for landing in. There are here the ruins of an ancient monastery, but very inconsiderable, and rude in execution. The walls in most parts are nearly levelled with the ground. A detached building, which is now re-edified and used as a banqueting room for parties of pleasure, retains an old door-case, which has been extremely rich, but being of a soft stone is much defaced.

This house was founded in the middle of the sixth century, by St. Finian*, surnamed Lobhar, (i. e. Lepper). In it was formerly kept a chronicle, which is often quoted by Sir James Ware, and other historians, under the title of Annals of Innisfall †. The extent of the island

* St. Finian flourished in the sixth century; his father's name was Conail, the son of Eschad, descended from Kian the son of Alild, king of Munster. Besides this abbey of Innisfallen, he founded that called from him, Ardfinnan, in the county of Tipperary; and also another at Cluanmore Madoc, in Leinster, where he was buried. COLGAN.

† These annals contain a sketch of universal history, from the

To face page 135.

island is twelve or thirteen acres; the soil so uncommonly rich, that it has given rise to the most extravagant tales; however, the cattle which are put on it thrive so astonishingly, that in a short time their fat becomes like marrow; too soft and rich for the manufacture of candles.

There are many fruit-trees, plumbs, pears, &c. which have outlived the wreck of this abbey. In 1180 it was plundered by Mildwin, son of Daniel O'Donoghoe, of a great treasure of gold, silver, and rich goods of the adjacent country, which had been deposited here as a place of safety. From this island there is a charming prospect of the opposite shores of Glanaá, rising into magnificent

the creation of the world to the year 430, or thereabouts; but from thence the annalist gives a copious account of the affairs of Ireland down to his own time. He lived to the year 1215. Sir James Ware had a copy of them. They were continued by another hand to the year 1320. Bishop Nicholson, in his Irish historical library, informs us, that the Duke of Chandos had a complete copy of them down to 1320.

mountains variegated with forests half way up. To the west rises Tomish; his lofty pike piercing the clouds; along their sides fall numerous cataracts, half hid from the distant eye by impervious woods. Around are spangled numberless islands; some crowned with arbutus, resembling stately ruins: others so worn, by the lashing of the waves, that ponderous arches are left detached from the main rock, supported only by slender pillars, terrible to pass under. To the north and east the shores are low but beautifully verdant. Leaving our provisions with the fisherman, who lives here, we embarked; and, gliding along the delightful shades of Genaá, we entered Mucruss lake, between Brickeen and Dinas island, under a single gothic arch, which is thrown across to connect them. This lake is small, but very marked in its character, which indeed they all are*. The

* I should distinguish the upper lake as being the most sublime; the lower the most beautiful; and this (Mucruss) lake

The north and eastern sides are broken into the most grotesque forms; the rocks are stupendous, crowned with the most picturesque foliage, unassisted by soil. The waving groves of Mucruss lend their cool and grateful shade, in contrast with their opposite neighbour, the rugged woodless Turk; beyond which, in transcendent magnitude rises Mangerton.

> ————Over head up grow
> Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
> Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
> A sylvan scene; and as the ranks ascend
> Shade above shade, a woody theatre
> Of stateliest view————
> Luxuriant: meanwhile murmuring waters fall
> Down the slope hills dispers'd, or in a lake
> ————————Unite their streams.

Its known altitude is 1020 yards above the surface of the lake, which lies considerably

lake the most picturesque; the winding passage leading to the upper, contains a surprizing combination of the three, and probably is not to be exceeded by any spot in the world.

higher

higher than the sea*. It abounds with extraordinary objects, well worth (to the curious naturalist) the trouble of exploring. On its western side is a small circular lake, or bason, about six hundred yards in diameter, across the top; from the brink, looking downwards, it forms a fearful depth of nearly three hundred yards; its sides are almost perpendicular, and of an equal degree of declivity; this the natives call the Devil's punch bowl, from its similar regular concavity. On the side next Mucruss, there is an immense perpendicular chasm, equal in depth to the height of the sides of the bowl, through which the overflow-

* M'Gillycuddy's rocks seem higher to the eye; but most hills which are conical, and terminating in points, appear higher at a distance than those mountains which have a large surface on their tops. They are steeper than Mangerton, and have more terrible precipices and declivities; so that it was in a manner impossible to determine their height by a barometer.

SMITH'S HISTORY OF KERRY, p. 122.

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ing of this lake empties itself, tumbling down the sides of the hill, nearly two hundred feet into Mucruss lake, forming a grand and broken fall.

On our return, along Glenaá, we discovered innumerable echoes, prodigiously grand and solemn, particularly from the cannon, which burst like the most dreadful thunder rolling from side to side; frequently dying away, they would re-commence, and approach us slowly; sometimes interrupted by a sudden sound like a single clap of thunder, answered by two or three distinctly, then mingle into one continued sound, seeming as if the mountains groaned in dreadful labour, such as precedes the most horrible commotion of nature.

The sad and awful impressions made upon the mind by this terrible sublime effect, are delightfully displaced by the echoes from the horn, which are exquisite, and the very soul

of

of harmony*. Before we reached the island of Innisfallen, the face of the lake became totally changed; the sky began to lower, and darkened the surface of the water, assuming an alarming aspect, particularly to us who were unused to the sudden changes that are frequently experienced during this and the ensuing month. The boatmen declaring it would be squally, pressed forward with all their might. Thick mists hung down the hills and hid them entirely. By degrees a general gloom involved the whole, while the wind swept down the sides of Glenaá and Tomish; lifting the waves

* There are certain letters which no echo will return, or express, particularly an S; of which Lord Bacon gives a pleasant instance, in a celebrated echo formed by the walls of a ruined church, at Pont Charenton, near Paris; where there was an old Parisian who took it to be the work of spirits, and of good spirits; 'for,' said he, 'if you call, Satan, the echo will not deliver back the Devil's name, but will say vat en, which signifies avoid;' by which circumstance his lordship discovered that an echo would not return an S.

to

to an alarming height, giving it all the appearance of the angry Atlantic. This was followed by heavy rain, which, with the waves breaking over us, soaked us entirely through; even the thick coats which the boatmen lent us proved insufficient to protect us from the spray. At length we gained the island, but not without some difficulty. A good fire at the fisherman's cottage, where our dinner was dressing, proved a seasonable relief; and we seated ourselves round it with no small degree of pleasure, I assure you. About four o'clock the evening calmed, and the surface of the lake resumed its wonted serenity; this opportunity we availed ourselves of, and, embarking, crossed over to the woody shores of Glenaá, where we were instantly struck with the distant roaring of O'Sullivan's cascade, which encreased like tremendous thunder, as we ascended the rocky glen. With excessive toil we forced our way through thick

entangled

entangled woods and pathless steeps, till at once it burst upon our view.

> Smooth to the shelving brink the copious flood
> Rolls fair and placid ; where collected all,
> In one impetuous torrent, down the steep
> It thundering shoots, and shakes the country round.
> At first, an azure street, it ushers broad ;
> Then whitening by degrees as prone it falls ;
> And from the loud-resounding rocks below
> Dash'd in a cloud of foam, it sends aloft
> A hoary mist, and forms a ceaseless shower.
> Nor can the tortured wave here find repose :
> But, raging still among the shaggy rocks,
> Now flashes o'er the scatter'd fragments, now
> Aslant the hollowed channel rapid darts ;
> And falling fast from gradual slope to slope,
> With wild infracted course and lessened roar,
> It gains a safer bed.———

These lines of Thomson so truly depict the scene, that I could not resist describing it with his words. Here we met with some girls gathering nuts, lightly attired, in all the simplicity

plicity of primeval innocence, pretty, and exceedingly modest.

After returning to Innisfallen, we re-embarked, and proceeded homewards; the shades of evening spread over the hills, and wrapt their forests in one deep undistinguishable gloom; the islands appearing but as black specks upon the faintly glowing surface of the waters. All was still, except where the distant wave unceasing lashed against the broken shore, producing a solitary sound, which rendered silence still more perceptible and impressive.

When within a quarter of a mile of Ross Castle, the boatmen rested on their oars, while the horn sounded four notes; these were returned once from the castle, after a lapse of about six seconds, amazingly perfect, and rather louder than the horn. After about thirty seconds more, a low and regular chord composed of the four notes, was heard among the hills; one note for a short space continuing

ing whilst two would rise and fall; displacing each other irregularly, but still forming harmony, and seemingly endeavouring to liberate themselves from the hills which at length they apparently effect, and move around upon the surface of the water.

This has all the effect of magic upon the musical mind, and lifts it above the ordinary feelings of its nature.

Adieu, my dear Sir, &c.

G. H.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Tuesday, Sept. 5.

DEAR SIR,

SINCE my last letter, I have spent most of my time amongst the alpine regions which extend west of the lakes, and which, until lately, were esteemed impassable: they are prodigious, and abound in sublime scenery, particularly a deep chasm or glin, called the Gap: we left town yesterday morning for the purpose of seeing it. On our way we passed New Pallice, the seat of the late M'Carty More, near which are the ruins of another old seat belonging to that family, also called Pallice. Towards the west end of the lake is

Tomes (or Tomies), the ancient seat of O'Sullivan More. Dunlow castle, the residence of Mr. Mahony, is charmingly situated on an eminence, commanding a noble prospect of the lower lake, and the winding Laune, which waters its woody base in its way to the bay of Castlemain. Towards the south we entered the glin by a difficult pass, and soon found ourselves enveloped by steep and lofty mountains, with dreadful dark precipices overhanging us; through the middle runs a stream, in some parts inconsiderable, but in others expanded into loughs.

Arriving at a bridge of rude and massy architecture, which grouped admirably with the grand whole, we alighted from our horses, which we now found unsafe to ride, from the rough uncertain footing beneath us; so leading them by the bridles, we passed, with some exertions, along the base of the Purple Mountains, so called from a beautiful kind of heath which covers their sides almost to their tops,

tops, with a perpetual bloom. Here we were astonished by the unexpected appearance of the rocks, rising in horrid grandeur to the clouds, which slowly passed their summits; by which we concluded we were behind the upper lake.

Seating ourselves underneath a projecting rock, we counted nine cascades precipitating from different cliffs, down immense declivities, forming a most magnificent appearance. You may picture to yourself a just idea of the general face of this country, when I tell you that this is but one of the numerous defiles which lead through these stupendous mountains.

Fatigue, at length, put a stop to our further progress, and we were necessitated to turn our steps homeward, without satisfying our curiosity as to the extent and course of this tremendous passage. Amongst the rocks I found great plenty of the Sedum Montanum*, or

* Mr. Ray, in his Historia Plantarum, mentions it as a plant common in all our gardens, but where it grows naturally is

or London Pride, which here, as well as on the shores of the lakes, grows with uncommon luxuriance; the Arbutus and Sorbus are here likewise scattered through the cliffs, a proof that these shrubs were not planted by the monks in the islands of the lakes, as some have asserted, but the spontaneous produce of these hills.

We propose leaving Killarny to-morrow morning, and shall direct our course towards Cork; I, however, cannot quit it without speaking of the novelties of the chace, which here is enjoyed in a manner peculiar to the spot. The echoes caused by this sport reverberate the sounds in a manner not to be believed by any but those who have heard them; the duration of a single sound being near a minute, and yet the repercussions are innumerable, and the variety inconceivable. The deer are roused from the deep woods

not as yet known to us; he never found it in all his travels, indigenous. It grows in the Muskery Hills, and several others in the county of Cork, as well as this county.

which

which skirt the lake by hunters used to the sport on foot, as horses are useless, not being able to make their way through the bottoms, nor rise the steep declivities. The hills are lined with hardy peasants, who encounter the most imminent danger and extreme fatigue to assist and enjoy the chace; while on the lake are scattered numerous boats, full of anxious spectators. The animal darting from his covert, makes towards the soft lawns, which sometimes verge upon the lake; and bounding along the shore, he is hotly pursued by his loud-tongued enemies, whose various notes, and the cheering shouts of the men along the hills, joined with the sounding horns through the woods and on the lake, cause one continued roll of harmonic thunder among the hills and hanging forests. He now looks upwards, and panting seeks the rocky eminence, but in vain; his lofty antlers, once his pride, are now, alas, his ruin!—He presses on, plunging in entangled boughs and thickets, which

cruelly retard his progress, till glancing backwards, he sees his open-mouthed enemies gaining on his heels, then downwards again he bounds and gains the shore; but here he is assailed by the loud shouts and horns, of the enjoying spectators in their crowded boats. He hesitates—once more looks upward; but the hills are insurmountable, and his favourite shades now oppose his flight and refuse him shelter. A moment longer he stops—looks back:—the roaring of the dogs are in his ears—their eager mouths send forth the cry of death as they gain upon his lagging steps—the big tears start from his distracted eyes, which are fixed in ardent gaze upon the lake, his last and sad retreat. Suddenly, in desperation, he plunges from the bank, and gives his ample breast unto the wave. But, alas! his fate his fixed—he gains but a few minutes respite—the shouting boatmen surround the victim—he is dragged with ropes into their boat—and, with peals of exultation that thunder

thunder through the woods, he is brought to land.

Thus snatching his life from the cruel pack, he, fainting, yields it to relentless man.

The peasantry of the county are very marked in their character; tall and well proportioned, black hair, brown complexion, and with very expressive eyes. Their mental faculties are very acute and lively; and amongst the uncultivated part of the country, many may be met with who are good Latin scholars, yet do not speak a word of English. Greek is also taught in the mountainous parts by some itenerant teachers; on which hear what Mr. Smith says:—

"Classical reading extends itself even to a fault amongst the lower and poorer kind in this county; many of whom, to the taking them off more useful works, have greater knowledge in this way, than some of the better sort in other places; neither is the genius of the commonalty confined to this kind of

learning alone; for I saw a poor man, near Blackstones, who had a tolerable notion of calculating the epacts, golden number, dominical letter, the moons phases, and even eclipses, although he had never been taught to read English."

I will not conclude this letter until I arrive at Cork. I leave this delightful spot with regret, and not without hopes of visiting it again. Farewell.

Cork, Thursday, Sept. 7.

Yesterday morning early, we departed from the Lakes, three miles from which we entered upon a boggy mountainous tract. On our right, we were much struck with the singular appearance of the two hills, called the Paps. They are smoothly formed to the fairest proportion, imitating in the closest manner the beautiful outline of a woman's bosom. On the summit of each is a rock, resembling the nipple of the breast (an odd coincidence), giving a most interesting finish to the

the whole: they derive their name from this extraordinary similarity. Quitting the county of Kerry, we entered the county of Cork, near Mill-street, where we stopped to take some refreshment, before we encountered the Baggra mountains, which extend themselves nearly ten miles. In winter, these wilds are in most places impassable; but in summer, hard and firm, producing grass and heath, and grazed by vast herds of cattle, which are removed to the low lands, when the season is over. Black fogs are engendered, and constantly hang round these inhospitable hills.

" ———— The brown burnt earth
Of fruits and flowers, and every verdure spoil'd,
Barren and bare, a joyless dreary waste,
Thin cottag'd, and in time of trying need,
Abandon'd.————
Those roving mists, that constant now begin
To smoak along the hilly country, these
The mountain cisterns fill; those grand reserves
Of water, scoop'd among the hollow rocks,
Whence gush the streams, the ceaseless fountains play,

And

And their unfailing stores the rivers draw,
To send a thund'ring torrent to the main."

To the west, the hills of Muskery lift their dark summits, and lend their assistance to this dreary scene, conveying the appearance of a boundless rocky desert. On the borders, near the road side, is Donaghmore, the patron saint of which was named Lachteen; and some years ago, a brazen hand was kept here as a holy relick, by which the people swore upon solemn occasions; but it was removed, very properly, by order of one of the Roman Catholic bishops of Cloyne. Passing Blarney castle, five miles brought us to Cork, fatigued to death, and happy to rest our wearied limbs.

You must not expect a particular account of this city, it does not come within the limits of my time or plan; and as it can be met with in other works *, to them therefore I shall refer you, my principal aim being to local situa-

* Smith's History of Cork, &c.

tions

tions and circumstances. The antient name given to this city by the Irish, was Corcach†, and Corcach-Bascoin, signifying a marshy place; and the harbour was called Bealagh Conliach. In the ninth century it was enlarged by the Danes, and walled, as were several other maritime towns about the same period. They enriched themselves equally by commerce and piracy, which in earlier ages was not accounted infamous. The city lies mostly on a marshy island, surrounded by the river Lee, that, about ten miles below the city, empties itself into the sea. It is admirably situated for commerce, and since the sixteenth

* An anonymous writer of the life of St. Cadroc, supposed to be wrote about the year 1040, deduces the origin of some of the Irish from a city of Asia Minor, on the river Pactolus, called Choriscon, whose inhabitants made a migration in order to settle in Thrace; but by storms and accidents, they were thrown upon Ireland. The writer describes the voyage with all the gravity and circumstance of a fellow voyager, with these Choriscons; and asserts, that they having seized this district with some others, named it Corischia.

century

century has encreased beyond Limerick and Waterford, which then were accounted before it, and now bears the same proportion, with respect to size, to Dublin, that Bristol does to London; but very superior to Dublin in commerce. Formerly, the suburb on the south side of the river, was better built and more populous than that on the north side; but lately, this last has expanded much beyond the former. Within the space of sixty years it has encreased thrice its size; its commerce keeping pace with its population. There were antiently twelve churches in and about Cork, as appears from a paragraph in king Edward the Fourth's charter.* The cathedral was founded by St. Finbar, to whom it was dedicated,

* 1. St. Mary Shandon; 2. St. Catharine; 3. St. Brendan, on the north side of the river; 4. Christchurch; 5. St. Peter; 6. St. John; 7. St. Nicholas; 8. St. Bridget; 9. St. Mary de Nard; 10. St. Stephen, the five last on the south side of the river; 11. St. Laurence's chapel, near the south gate; and 12. St. Finbar's, the cathedral; St. Anne's and St. Paul's were built lately.

in

in the seventh century*. Gilla-Æda O Mugin, bishop of Cork, and his successors. Gregory and Reginald are mentioned as the principal benefactors to this church, which by length of time fell greatly into decay and ruin. It was rebuilt in the year 1735, and is a handsome building of Grecian architecture; the choir is not as good as that of Cashel; there were six abbeys, but very little of their remains are to be seen †. Of late, Cork has not been

* The name of Finbar, literally signifies, white or grey-headed; his real name was Lachan, being so baptized; he was a native of Connaught, and having sat seventeen years in this see, died at Cloyne, in the midst of his friends; his bones, several years after, were deposited in a silver shrine, and kept in this cathedral. It is said, that in his convent were seventeen prelates constantly residing, and 700 of the clergy.

† Gill Abbey, founded on the south-west side of the city, by St. Finbar, for canons regular of St. Augustin. Near is a cave, called by ancient MSS. the cave of St. Finbar. According to Sir James Ware, this is the house which St. Bernard calls Monasterium Ibracense.

A convent

been esteemed a defensible city, being commanded by eminences on both sides; but previous to the use of gunpowder, its insular situation, and being surrounded by strong walls flanked with round towers, rendered it a station of the first consequence. In 1197 it was

A convent of Augustine Cremites, founded on the south side of the city, by Patrick de Courcy, baron of Kinsale, about the year 1420.

A monastery of Dominicans, or Black Monks, founded by the Barrys, anno 1229. The figure of Philip de Barry, the principal benefactor, on horseback, in brass, formerly hung up in the church.

A priory of the Benedictine order, founded by John, Earl of Moreton (afterwards king John), in the 12th century, which he made a cell to the abbey of Bath, in England.

A monastery of Franciscans, or Grey Friars, founded 1231; Ware says 1240, by Philip Prendergrast. Tradding says, the founder was M'Carty More, whose tomb stood in the midst of the choir. From the strict discipline kept in this house, it obtained the name of the mirror of Ireland. In the church, which was a stately edifice, king James II. heard mass, in March 1688, being supported through the streets of the city by two Franciscan friars, and attended by several others of the same order.

the

the only strong tower in all Munster which remained in the hands of the English; to secure which, an army was marched to its succour; but the troops of Desmond, with levies from Connaught, headed by O'Loughlan, chief of the antient house of the northern Hy Nial, and Cathal, Prince of Connaught, meeting them, gave them a signal defeat; and besieging Cork, cut off the garrison from all succour, and obliged it to surrender*. Afterwards, it was again possessed by the English, and held till the beginning of the reign of James I. when the inhabitants took up arms, set up the mass, and defied the English power. However, they were besieged by Sir Charles Wilmot, and Sir George Thornton; and not being in a situation to hold out, opened the gates to the lord deputy Mountjoy. Upon this occasion, the fort on the south side of the town was rebuilt as a citadel, to curb the citizens in future.

* Leland's History of Ireland.

In

In 1690, it was again besieged by the Earl of Marlborough, and held out five days: the garrison, consisting of 4500 men, surrendered prisoners of war. Within these few years this city has been much improved, by filling up the old canals and dykes, on which handsome streets were erected; still there are many remaining, embanked similar to the cities in Holland, which cannot be wholesome to the inhabitants. The parade is the resort of much fashionable company; it is a fine street, terminating in the river Lee; and in the centre, an equestrian statue of George II. The Mardyke is a beautiful public walk, extending along the banks of the river nearly a mile in length, planted on each side with trees, which throw a pleasant shade; between them are seen the opposite banks of the river, rising into heights, spangled over with houses and hanging gardens, that reach from the brink to the summit, which, with the passing boats, render it a most pleasing promenade. There is an handsome

handsome custom-house and exchange, of modern date. Notwithstanding the numerous quays, the shipping load and discharge by means of lighters or barges, carrying in general thirty tons, which are loaded at the doors of the storehouses, and conveyed down the river to the stations at Cove and Passage.

We purpose making some excursions into the neighbourhood of the city, so you may expect to hear from me soon again.

Adieu, my dear Sir,

And believe me,

Your's, &c.

G. H.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Saturday, Sept. 9.

DEAR SIR,

FROM the distant view we had of Blarney Castle, on the evening we arrived at Cork, we determined on taking the first opportunity of visiting it, which we did yesterday. It lies on the river Aubeg, about four miles from Cork, and was built by Cormac M'Carty, surnamed Laider, who came into the lordship in 1449, and was esteemed one of the strongest fortresses in Munster. In the Pacata Hibernia, it is described as being composed of four large piles joined in one. These piles, I suppose, meant great towers, one of which

which remains, of an immense size; its foundation is laid in the solid rock, which secures it from mining, the walls are eighteen feet thick, and are flanked with bastions. In 1602, Cormac M'Dermot Carty, was accused of holding treasonable correspondence with the rebels, and obliged to deliver this castle into the possession of Captain Taafe, for her Majesty's use. This Cormac is represented as a man of great power, being able to raise a thousand men at a call; he also possessed the castles of Macroomp and Kilcrea*; the latter he gave up to the lord president Carew, being then his prisoner, but escaped out of his hands soon after. Great part of the original building is entirely down, but the additions which

* The M'Carties were summoned by parliament as Barons of Blarney. In the reign of Elizabeth they were created Viscounts of Muskery; and by Charles II. Earls of Clancarty. The two principal branches of this great family were, M'Carty More, created by Elizabeth, Earl of Clancare, or Glencare, in Kerry; and the above family, called M'Carty Reagh, of Carbery, an immense territory.

have been added, were so judiciously designed and executed, that they become now a part, admirably blending with the whole, and do not offend the eye by incongruity. In the grounds are very curious masses of artificial rocks, the best managed I ever saw: age has covered them with moss and various kinds of herbage, giving them all the appearance of being natural. The majestic trees which surround the castle, and spread their dark shade over the grounds, diffuse a gloom that accords well with the building, and is by no means unpleasing. This manor, with a large estate in this county, were forfeited by M'Carty*, Earl of Clancarty, for his adherence to

* He was pardoned by king William, on condition of leaving the country within a given period, and allowed a pension of 300l. per annum for life, and never to take up arms against the Protestant succession. He retired to Hamburgh, and purchased a small island in the mouth of the Elbe, from the citizens of Altena, which went by his own name; on it he erected a convenient dwelling house, and a range of storehouses,

to James II. It is now the property of Mr. Jeffries, being purchased from the crown. At present it is undergoing a thorough repair, and I must own I felt a sincere pleasure in contemplating its renovation, and resumption of its antient dignity.

Were gentlemen to consider the respectability which such residences attach to their name and family, we should not meet with so many noble piles mouldering away in ruined grandeur, the indisputable documents of our ancestors' power and magnificence. This castle annoyed Cork exceedingly in the war of 1641, but was taken by Lord Broghill, in 1646.

storehouses, and made considerable profit by shipwrecks; but continued to give the distressed all the relief in his power, and saved the lives of many; his profit arose from goods thrown on his island, which he placed in his storehouses; and if demanded by their owners within the space of a year, he returned them, requiring only two per cent. for the storeroom; if not, he made use of them as his own. He died here October 22, 1734, aged sixty-four; leaving behind him two sons; Robert, afterwards a commodore in the English navy, and Justin M'Carty, Esq.

The lands are mostly under corn and pasture, the soil is a yellowish clay, which they manure with lime.

Monday Night, Sept. 11.

This morning we set out to see Cove Island, and the harbour. Having rode to Passage, we embarked on board a small boat, and proceeded down the western channel, where we had to encounter a strong current and a boisterous wind, particularly under the cliffs of Moncktown castle, a massive ruin, flanked with square towers. With much difficulty, and some danger from the heavy swell, we gained Cove town, a wretched dirty place, inhabited chiefly by sailors and fishermen. This island forms one side of the harbour, and is four miles long and two broad; it was formerly called the Island of Barrymore, from its belonging to that family. The chief passage to it was on the north side, where the channel is very narrow, and was defended by the castle of Ballyvelly, built by the Hodnets, once

once a potent sept in this country; to the west of which, is Ronayne's Grove, originally called Hodnet's Wood. From the gardens there is a charming view of the opposite town of Passage, and up the river to Cork; the banks covered with houses and gardens, conveying a most happy effect of population and riches. On the eastern side is Belgrove, commanding a prospect of the eastern channel of the island, which is broad and deep, forming a noble bason. Near Cove, at a place called Cuskinny, is a fine fort, generally called Cove Fort; it is composed of three tiers of guns; the lower range, on a level with the water, mounts eight twenty-four pounders; the middle over it, twelve twenty-four pounders; and the upper, twenty twenty-four pounders. The barracks are situated over the fort; and here there is another battery, now planning out by the engineer, for defence on the land side; the shore along this part is bold, and the water deep. Nearly opposite are the small islands of Spike

and Howlbowlin, happily situated to prevent the tide of ebb, and land floods, from damaging the shipping which ride before Cove. Nature, in forming this harbour, has done all the most skilful engineer could wish, both as to security and strength, and it is generally thought to be one of the most commodious in the world, being capable of containing many hundred of the largest ships of war without the least inconvenience.

The entrance is defended by Spike island, and Carlisle forts; the latter of very considerable strength, and seated on high and craggy cliffs, commanding the outer mouth, or entrance: on the whole, this harbour, in a very particular manner, answers the fine description given by Virgil, in his first Æneid, of a beautiful port :—

" Within a long recess, there lies a bay,
An island shades it from the rolling sea,
And forms a port, secure for ships to ride,
Broke by jutting land on either side,
In double streams the briny waters glide

Betwixt

Betwixt two rows of rocks: a sylvan scene
Appears above, and groves for ever green."

The clustering groupes of shipping, which at a distance appear like far extending groves, are highly entertaining: the various vessels from different countries, the lofty ships of war, and numerous small craft, give this spot a most pleasing animated appearance. Having crossed the harbour, we landed near Rostillian, a noble seat of the Earl of Inchiquin; it is pleasantly situated upon an arm of the sea, towards the eastern side of the harbour, where the tide gently flows up to the garden walls. It originally belonged to Robert Fitz Stephen, to whom half the kingdom of Cork was granted; but the castle, which some years ago stood here, was erected by one of the Fitzgeralds, and in the year 1645, was taken by Murrough, Lord president of Munster, ancestor to the present Earl, and was retaken the same year by the Earl of Castlehaven. The house of Rostillian stands upon the scite of the old castle, and is a fine mansion.

Sending

Sending our boat away to meet us at an appointed place, we walked along a part of the shore, admiring the various beauties which mark this harbour, where, combined with marine objects, you have a fine luxuriant country to contrast with them. Castle Mary is charmingly seated upon a bay, which runs in about a mile upon the eastern side, from whence a fine view of the great island, with Spike and Howlbowlin, and the opposite shores of the harbour. Near the house are the remains of a Druidical altar; the upper or great stone, is fifteen feet long, and eight broad, rather tending to an oval form, supported by three lesser ones; adjoining to it, is a round flag stone or table, which was probably used for cutting up the victims. This altar was named, in Irish, Carig Croith (i. e. the Sun's Rock)*. The ancient Irish worshipped

* These rude altars are called, in general, Cromliagh; in the old British, Crom-leche, which signify in both, a crooked stone, not from any crookedness in themselves, but from their

shipped the sun, and swore by its head (i. e. Cean grioth). St. Patrick, in his confession, which he wrote by way of epistle to the Irish, says, "The splendour of the sun shall not always reign, nor have continuance for ever; but all who adore him shall unhappily fall into eternal punishment."

This was, very probably, an altar dedicated to the sun*. Within about a mile to the east is

their inclining posture. Mr. Rowland, in his Mona Antiqua, conjectures, that the word is derived from the Hebrew, Carum luach (i. e. a devoted table, or altar). In Exodus, chap. xx. verse 25, there is an injunction to erect their altars of unhewn stone; "for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it;" yet, in some, I have observed a groove, or hollow, along the centre of the great stone, which was probably to permit the blood of the victim to flow off.

* Diodorus Siculus has preserved an account out of Hecateus, a very ancient author, "of a northern island, little less than Sicily, situated over against the Celtæ, and inhabited by those whom the Greeks called Hyperboreans. It is," says he, "fruitful, pleasant, and dedicated to Apollo; that god, for the space of nineteen years, used to come and converse

is the ancient bishoprick of Cloyne, founded by St. Colman, in the sixth century, who was the first bishop. It was anciently called Cluain

converse with them; and which is more remarkable, they could shew the moon very near them, and discover therein mountains, &c. They had a large grove and temple, of a round form, to which the priests frequently resorted with their harps, to chaunt the praises of Apollo, their great deity." He says "they had a language of their own, and that some Greeks had been in it, and presented valuable gifts to this temple, with Greek inscriptions on them; and that one Abaris, who became afterwards a disciple of Pythagoras, went hence into Greece, and contracted an intimacy with the Delians."

Now the situation of this island, opposite to the Celtæ, who were the inhabitants of Gallia and Britain; its being compared with Sicily in size; its being dedicated to Apollo (i. e. the sun) which planet the Irish worshipped; the description of their temples, which were always round, and the mention of their harps, are all so many concurring circumstances, which seem more than probable that this could be no other than Ireland; for the Mona of Rowland is too inconsiderable a spot to be meant here. (Vide Rowland's Mona Antiqua, p. 76). Mr. Smith speaks of having seen

schemes

ain Vamha, and in the old Roman provincial Cluain Vanian; Clone, or Cluain, signifies a den or cave, also an enclosure or retirement; Vamha signifies a place of horror or darkness.

Near this town, in a park, once a part of the domain of this Lee, there is a deep extensive cave which might have given rise to the name. The cathedral is a plain structure, and venerable in its appearance: the nave in length is about a hundred and thirty feet; the choir seventy-five. This see was united to that of Cork, anno 1430, by pope Martin V. Near the church is one of the round towers; the door is more than twelve feet from the ground, and faces the west entrance to the church. There are here the remains of a castle built by

schemes of the Ptolemaic system in some Irish MSS. of great antiquity.

At Lismore, where was an ancient college, there is a tradition remaining of several Greeks having studied there in the earlier ages; and that the school was originally founded by two Greek princes.

the

the Fitzgerald family, but very inconsiderable. The fertility of this tract is highly pleasing, being all under tillage, principally wheat and barley, with some potatoes.

Embarking again, we crossed the eastern passage to the great island, from whence we passed over to the town of Passage, where our horses waited for us, and so returned to Cork.

Tuesday 12th.

This morning we rode to the ruined castle of Carigrohan, on the south side of the Lee; it is built on a steep precipice over the river, about two miles from town. From the remains of the outworks, it must have been a very considerable building. At the outer gate there is a noble sycamore tree, whose branches extend from tip to tip, a hundred feet; its stem is of an immense thickness. This fine castle was destroyed in the wars of 1641, and shortly after one Captain Cape, with several of his desperate companions, whose

whose fortunes were ruined, retired here as a safe retreat, from whence they issued to plunder the neighbouring country. The opposite shores are beautifully adorned by gardens, particularly the seat of mount Desart, whose woods and varied grounds afford a most pleasing object from this side, and from whence there must be a fine prospect of the city and harbour. In the river here are found fresh-water muscles; they lie in the deepest part of the river; the method of taking them is this: the fisherman is entirely naked, having a small osier in his hand, and during the bright sun-shine, for then only they open their shells, he gently guides the end of the stick between their shells, when they instantly close, and he easily draws them up. In those muscles are frequently found a pearl, sometimes the size of a large pea, and of a good water.

Near the city are large weirs for taking salmon; they were originally built by the monks

monks of Gill Abbey, and granted with the possessions of that house, to the first Earl of Cork. This circumstance prevents the fish from getting much higher up, otherwise they would be equally plentiful in the rivers which join the Lee. Spenser, in the Episode of the Marriage of the Thames and Medway, in his Fairy Queen, wherein he introduces several of our Irish rivers, describes this river with great truth.

> There also was the wide embayed Maire,
> The pleasant Bandon crown'd with many a wood;
> The spreading Lee, that like an island fair,
> Encloseth Cork with his divided flood.

Salmon is here never out of season, of which great quantities are taken all the year round. We purpose leaving Cork to-morrow. Farewell, my dear Sir, and believe me,

Your's, &c.

G. H.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

Thursday 14th.

DEAR SIR,

WE left Cork yesterday in the afternoon, having determined on sleeping at Rathcormuck, twelve miles from town. It is a pretty small market town and borough, situated near to the river Bride; has a very neat church and a session house, and returns two members to parliament. It belongs to an antient branch of the Barry family, commonly called M'Adam, seated here nearly six hundred years. To the north east there is an extensive range of mountains; the last hill of which, to the east, is called Cairn-Tierna (i. e.

the Thanes Heap). On the summit is an immense heap of rude stones, which, tradition tells us, were named after the thane, or lord of this district, on which he held assemblies of his followers, and where chiefs were elected according to the custom of Tanistry, which prevailed in this country.* This morning we left

* About five miles from this, near Glanworth, is a curious monument called Labacally (i. e. the Hag's bed). From its size, it must have been designed for some eminent person, but of which nothing now remains even from tradition. It consists of several broad flag stones, supported by others of various sizes, pitched in the ground. One of the upper stones is seventeen feet long, and nine broad, and in the middle six feet thick, from whence it slopes to the edges; at the end of the great one are two others, which seem to be intended to lengthen the whole; the first of these is eleven feet broad and seven long, and the last seven feet square. There was a fourth huge flag which lies on the west side; on each side are double rows of broad flags, on which the great flags rested; some are five and six feet high, and three thick.

At about sixteen feet, another range of flag stones encircled the tomb, rude and various in the shapes and sizes. It is singular

left Rathcormuck very early, and rode on through a very charming country to Castle Lyons, otherwise Castle Lehan, from the O'Le-

singular to remark, that there is none of this kind of stone nearer than five or six miles, being a coarse grit, found in the mountains which separate this county from Limerick. When we hear of those vast bodies being lifted and carried by the antient inhabitants of this country, over hills and through valleys, we naturally wonder at the means which enabled them, not knowing that they possessed any knowledge of mechanical powers. De la Vaga mentions, that there were stones in the fortress of Cusco, in Peru, upwards of forty feet long, and were drawn by the strength of men, ten, twelve, or fifteen leagues over hills, and the most difficult ways, to that place; and there is one stone to which the Indians gave the name of Syacusa (i. e. the tired or the weary) because it never arrived at the place it was designed for, but remains still upon the road. This rock was drawn by 20,000 Indians, fifteen leagues over very rugged ways; but, notwithstanding all their care, it tumbled down a very steep hill and killed several hundred of the Indians, who were endeavouring to poise the weight. Thus these Indians, without pullies or other engines, lifted up vast stones to the top of steep hills, in order to build the places of strength, long before an European came among them.

hans, an antient Irish family who possessed it, and gave their name to the surrounding district. It is a very neat built town, agreeably situated, and well watered, not far from the river Bride, and appears to enjoy some trade. The houses are antient, and respectable in their appearance. There are the ruins of an Abbey of Franciscans, founded anno 1307, by John de Barry, but mouldering quickly away, not being protected from the devastations of the common people, who generally mutilate these venerable piles, to erect their own habitations. Lord Barrymore has a fine old mansion built on the foundation of O'Lehan's castle; it is a ponderous stately edifice, but going fast to decay, owing to the proprietor living mostly in England. There is a very curious aqueduct which conveys water from the river, contrived by a common miller, at a trifling expence, after the exertions of a celebrated artist from England had failed in bringing the water by another course. The

gardens

gardens are extensive and very beautiful, within which is a pleasant canal; the river Bride meanders through the deer park, producing many agreeable views. In throwing down some old walls of Castle Lehan, an antient chimney-piece was found with this inscription on it:

LEHAN O'CULLANE

HOC FECIT, MCIIII.

A circumstance which proves that stone buildings were earlier in use than what some antiquarians will allow*; pretending that none were erected

* In an ancient Irish MSS. containing some annals of Munster, there is mention made of the building of the round tower of Kineth, about the year 1015, soon after the celebrated battle of Clontarf, in relation to which there is the following passage:

Cian, or Kean M'Moilewoa, being married to the eldest daughter of Brien, late monarch of Ireland, set about conquering the kingdom from Donnel, the lawful heir, who was married to the second daughter of the monarch. Donnel marched with a thousand men near this tower of Kineth, then

erected previous to the twelfth century; a notion grounded on prejudice, and a total ignorance of the country. Passing the castle of Robertstown, which is a high square tower built by the Barrys, as a frontier to their territories, against the invasions of the Fitz Geralds of Coshbride, we entered upon a tract of mountain, from which we had a noble view

then building, and almost finished, by St. Mocholomog, the patron thereof, and implored that Saint's blessing, which he received. Cian being in pursuit of Donnel, came up to Kineth with 3000 men, suffered them to plunder it, and carry away the provisions of the workmen, for which he and his army were cursed by the Saint; and coming up with Donnel, were overthrown by him at a place called Ballingully, now Mogolin, six miles west of Cork.

VIDE SMITH'S HISTORY OF CORK, vol. ii. p. 416.

Dunchad O'Braoin, abbot of Clonmacnois, betook himself to one of those round towers to finish his days; which ended anno 987. Cambrensis, speaking of these high towers, says they were built '*more patrio*,' (i. e. after the custom of the country) which seems to imply an established method of building for a long time.

of

of the fertile vales beneath us; the river Bride on our right, and soon after, the Blackwater on our left. Five miles from Castle Lyons, we entered the county of Waterford. The beauty of the scenery surrounding Lismore is captivating. I know of no spot where the admirer of the picturesque will be more highly gratified than in this grand mixture of the sublimity of nature with the stupendous works of man. On entering Lismore, the traveller is struck with its venerable castle, lifting its high embattled towers in a kind of melancholy grandeur, bordering on sadness; the antient avenue, whose tall dark trees shed a gloom over the outer gate-house, gives its neglected front a deeper and more solemn shade. On the angles are ruined towers of prodigious strength, in the same roofless state that the wars of 1641 left them. Within the great gate-house there is a spacious court; on each side are the ranges of offices belonging to the castle, which faces the entrance, and forms a

parallelogram. Over the gate-house are the arms of the first Earl of Cork, who beautified and enlarged it. Descending on the eastern side to the bridge, we were charmed with its grand elevation; the north front rising from a perpendicular range of wooded rock, overhanging the Blackwater. Imagination cannot paint a more romantic scene. The broad and placid river, from which, on the left, arise lofty and richly covered rocks, to a fearful height, crowned with nodding groves, in some parts ranging down from the steep summit, cast their green branches in the stream; while, in others, they are separated by the jutting heads of moss-clad rocks, whose variegated sides of grey and spangled brown, contrast in a lively manner with the varied foliage. Over all, the ivied windows and pointed turrets lifting themselves high above the trees, which half disclose their antique casements, finish the picture to the left. On the right the shores are diversified by wood

and

Castle of Lismore, seen from the Bridge, County of Waterford.

and lawn, and behind opens a deep and thickly wooded glin, through which a small river, called Oon-a-shad, winds into the Blackwater; to the west, the salmon weirs traverse the river for a considerable way, and form several agreeable falls, the soft lulling sound of which greatly heightens the beauty of the whole. Few who see Lismore in its present state, would imagine it ever had been better than a sorry village; some tolerable houses, very thinly intermixed with poor cabins, are all that now remains of its ancient greatness. An old writer of the life of St. Carthagh, thus describes it: "Lessmor is a famous and holy city, half of which is an asylum into which no woman durst enter; but it is full of cells and holy monasteries, and religious men in great numbers abide there; and thither holy men flock together from all parts of Ireland; and not only from Ireland, but from England and Britain, being desirous to remove from thence to Christ; and the city is built

on

on the banks of a river formerly called Nun, but now Aban-mor*; that is, the great river in the territory of Nan-Deci, or Desies."

Lismore seems to derive its present name from a mount, or ancient fortification, standing a little to the east of the town, now called the round hill. Lis signifies a fort, and mor, great. Its more antient name was Magh-sgiath (i. e. the field of the shield) afterwards Dun-sginne; dun also signifies a fort seated on an eminence, and sgein, a flight: probably alluding to St. Carthagh, who was driven from Lestmeath, where he had founded the famous Abbey of Ratheny; and is said to have governed 867 monks for the space of forty years.

The annals of Innisfallen mention his flight, anno 631, and the same year was received by the prince of Deci, and founded the cathedral

* It was called by the English, Broadwater, and afterwards, Blackwater. Ptolomy notices it by the name of Daurona, and Neckham, Avon-mere.

and

and school of Lismore. He did not long survive the event, dying 14th May, 638, and was buried in his own cathedral. St. Cataldus, afterwards bishop of Tarentum, in Italy, was appointed regent over the school*; to which

* Cambden observes, that the Saxons crowded to Ireland as a great seat of learning; which is the reason, says he, why we so often find this in our writers;—"Such a one has sent his son over to Ireland to be educated." He likewise relates this passage in the life of Sulgenius, who flourished six hundred years before his time:

Exemplo patrum commotus amore legendi
Juvit ad Hibernos, sophia mirabile claros.

With love of learning, and examples fir'd,
To Ireland, fam'd for Wisdom, he retir'd.

Cambden further says, 'perhaps the Saxons, our forefathers might have taken the draught and form of their letters from them; their character being the same with that at this day used in Ireland.' CAMB. IN HIBERN.

Mr. Smith, in his history of Cork, says, that it was an Irish professor who first opened the public schools at Oxford. SMITH'S HISTORY OF CORK, p. 257.

flocked

flocked prodigious numbers from all parts, from its celebrity for the true philosophy. The cathedral stands on a high swelling bank, on the eastern side of the town; the choir only appears antient. This church suffered with the town considerably, having been several times plundered and burnt. Besides the cathedral, St. Carthagh founded an abbey of canons regular; his rule is said to be extant in antient Irish. Archbishop Usher had two MS. copies of his life; in one of which, the number of his scholars in Meath is said to be 867, in the other, 844. The abbey stood where the castle is now built; of the other churches and schools, of which there were twenty, nothing now remains except a few heaps of rubbish. The see of Lismore was united to that of Waterford, during the life of Thomas le Reeve, by Pope Urban V. and confirmed by King Edward III.

The castle was built by king John, in 1185, and was demolished by the Irish, who surprized

prized it, 1189, slaying the garrison, with Robert Barry the governor. After it was rebuilt, it continued to be the residence of the bishops, till the time of Miler Magragh, who, with the consent of the dean and chapter, granted it, with some lands, to Sir Walter Rawley, at the yearly rent of 13l. 6s. 8d.; soon after it came into the hands of Sir Richard Boyle, who purchased all Sir Walter's lands, and who beautified and enlarged it considerably. At the breaking out of the rebellion of 1641, it was besieged by 5000 Irish troops, commanded by Sir Richard Beling; but was bravely defended by the young Lord Broghil, third son to the Earl of Cork, who obliged the Irish to raise the siege; however, it did not long continue in the Earl's possession, being taken by Lord Castlehaven, 1645.

James II. dined in the great room, and going to look out of the window, started back in terror from its precipitate elevation above the river. One does not, on entering the castle,

tle, perceive it to be situated so high; nor can they suspect the perpendicular steepness of its rear. One of the rooms is celebrated for giving birth to the great Robert Boyle.

This noble pile is now in the possession of his grace the Duke of Devonshire, whose agent resides here, and has made many alterations and repairs, but with so little taste and adherence to the great original, that I am confident were the Duke to see them, his Grace would feel a sensible regret, and instantly order these unworthy repairs to be replaced by others more conformable to the antient style of the building.

The great flanking square towers are still roofless, except where the venerable and lofty ash trees fling their shady branches over their walls, and form a verdant canopy. This magnificent castle, at an inconsiderable expence, might be renovated and rendered one of the most respectable baronial dwellings, perhaps, in Europe; as a picturesque object it cannot be

be excelled. The bridge is a fine structure, consisting of one great arch of about 109 feet in the span, over the main part of the river, and of six smaller ones underneath the causeway on the north side; these last are intended to carry off the floods, which in autumn swell this river very considerably. To the munificent and public spirit of the present Duke of Devonshire, the county stands indebted for this noble bridge, erected at his Grace's sole expence. It remains a most honourable testimony of a princely liberality, and true patriotism.

A few days will now bring us together; I have a thousand things to say, and a thousand queries to be answered; till then believe me, as usual,

Your's,

Very truly,

G. H.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

Kilkenny, Saturday 16.

DEAR SIR,

ON Thursday we bid farewel to Lismore, having visited several adjacent spots charmingly situated upon the Blackwater, particularly Bally-Inn, the seat of Mr. Musgrave, from whence the view, up and down the river, is delightful. To the south-east of Lismore, is a fine deer park, well inclosed, comprehending 1192 acres. A vein of iron runs through it from west to east, which renders the ground poor and unfit either for tillage or pasture. Crossing the bridge, we rode on towards Cappoquin by the most beautiful public road I ever

ever saw; on the left the high grounds were covered with deep woods frequently reaching down to the water's edge; whose contrasted, yet blending tints, and varied character of form, produced an effect uncommonly fine; whilst numerous vistas formed by detached groupes of trees, presented to us, at every step, a new feature, each a rival to the other. Looking back upon the castle, the view comprehends a most noble assemblage of objects, in a superior degree calculated for the painter's contemplation. Cappoquin is a pretty, though inconsiderable town, close to which the river Beal-licky empties itself into the Blackwater; the castle was built by the Fitzgeralds, but at what period, is now uncertain. In the rebellion of 1645, it was taken by the Irish troops commanded by Lord Castlehaven, after an obstinate defence, but soon after fell into decay; it is now entirely modernized, having long lost its original form. At Saltbridge, near this, were formerly extensive iron-works carried on by the Earl of Cork, who supported

many

many similar throughout this country, which tended to destroy the extensive woods, now much to be regretted. These parts afford excellent orchards, where they carry the manufacture of cyder to a high pitch of excellence: The Herefordshire red-streak, thrives admirably in this soil; which contradicts Mr. Philips's assertion, that it thrives no where but in its own country. There is a very fine wooden bridge here, over the Blackwater. Rising the hill on the left of the town, we entered upon a wild uncultivated tract, consisting of vast clusters of stupendous hills, almost pathless: our course was uncertain, and often puzzling, however; we continued a northern direction, depending on the certainty of our information, though discouraged by what we encountered in Stack's mountains in the county of Kerry; we pushed on, under black precipices, and winding round fearful steeps; on our left, the lofty hill of Knock-Mele-Down arose, lost among the descending mists that hung around us: this hill is 900 yards in height,

height, ascertained by the barometer, and bounds the county of Waterford. The mists began to descend fast, and spread from base to base, of these huge hills, darkening the atmosphere, and chilling us with their damps; no human residence was to be seen, nor any living thing except a few ravens, which now and then heavily passed us close by, and no ways timid, flapping their moist wings, and hoarsely croaking; sometimes they would follow us a long way and very near, keeping up their discordant shrieks, by no means unpleasing, as it assisted in adding to the general and horrific sublimity of the whole; the words 'no means unpleasing,' may seem strange to you, when applied to any thing horrific, but it is no less certain, that terrific grandeur creates a sensation in our minds, (although awfully oppressive) yet leaving a desire behind, of experiencing the same again, which certainly never can be applied to any sensation that is unpleasing. The mists had

increased to so great a density, that we could not see beyond twelve yards. The evening was fast approaching, and as the day expired our spirits sunk with it. We found ourselves on the brink of a steep precipice, its sides ragged, and bottom strewed with loose rocks and stones; all the marks of an impetuous torrent were left behind, but little or no water; the rough path lay along the side of this deep gulph, painfully alarming, from our horses frequently starting at the quick approach of the ravens, who were hid by the thickness of the mist till close to the horses heads. In this doleful dilemma, we were cheered by the sound of horses, and shortly after two countrymen appeared—Happy sight! from them we gained every information, directing us to a small village called Newcastle, on the borders of the county of Tipperary, from which they had themselves come. Expressing our thanks for the welcome intelligence, we got forward, and from an opening in the mountains,

tains, began to descend towards the level country; however, before we got clear of these regions, night had made pretty long strides upon us. Crossing the bed of a mountain river, now almost dry, we gained a firm road, but without a friendly star to guide us to this wished-for village, where we hoped to rest till morning. But here Madam Fortune still continued to buffet us; not content with kicking us about like a foot-ball all day, on these dreary mountains, but she unkindly set us down in the most wretched of all hamlets, where not even a bed could be got for my poor horses, nor any kind of refreshment; to make matters worse, it was near seven o'clock, the night dark and dismal, and we seven miles from Clonmel. The delay we unnecessarily made at Cappoquin, now fell heavy on us; but regret was useless, there was but one determination amongst us, and that was, for getting out of this pitiful place, and though dark, take the road to Clonmel, which could

not be half so bad as that which we had left behind. After three hours dedicated to these seven miles, which were the most tedious of my life, we arrived at Clonmel, and set up at one of the most comfortable inns I ever met with.

Friday Morning, 15th.

Clonmel is agreeably situated on the north bank of the Suir, which is navigable from this to Waterford and Carrick. From the busy and thronged streets we passed through last night, we formed ideas which have been realized to-day.

The people are wealthy, the happy consequence of industry, which here has been manifested by the people called Quakers, who from their first settling in this town, have gradually added to its trade, having introduced the woollen manufacture, and still continue it. There is the most pleasing appearance of cleanliness through the town, even to its suburbs; there is a handsome bridge of twenty arches

over

over the Suir, which adds not a little to the pretty appearance of the place; the church is an indifferent edifice, formerly a part of the Benedictine monastery, one of the gates, and part of the walls remain, being mostly demolished by Cromwell, after he obtained possession of it, and where he exercised his brutal revenge by an horrible massacre. The brave Colonel Hugh O'Neal*, defended it to the last, till finding it untenable, and not likely to be relieved, withdrew the most of the garrison, chiefly consisting of Ulster men: Cromwell acknowledged to have lost two thousand of his choicest troops, in this affair. To the south of the town lies that tract called

* This O'Neal was governor of Limerick, and so ably defended it, in 1651, against Ireton; he was forced to give up the town, through the treachery of Colonel Fennel. Ireton had him tried by a court martial, and sentenced to death; however, on some consideration, there was a second enquiry, which ended in a ballot; his life was saved by the majority of one.

CURRY'S CIVIL WARS OF IRELAND.

the Commons of Clonmel, for the most part mountainous, affording little else but pasture. By the Down survey, it contained 5103 acres, which were forfeited during the usurpation, and little of it now remains to the corporation.

From the high grounds near the town, there is a north prospect of the plains of Tipperary, as far as the eye can reach, through which the curving Suir meanders, fertilizing as it strays: here the large extended lawns and sheep-walks meet the eye, which love to dwell upon their fresh verdure; a pleasing relief from the rude scenes we lately left behind us. Numberless handsome houses, and sheltering plantations, mingled with corn-fields, green meadows, and extensive orchards, gave an appearance of richness and cultivation to this immense plain, highly delightful to the traveller, particularly if he has passed through the mountainous regions of Knock-Mele-Down. There is a most excellent chalybeate spring here, it flows from the

the side of a rising bank, overhung by a steep hill on the south bank, or county of Waterford side of the river. It has been kept near a year in bottles, and, after being brought to Dublin, retained its tinging quality with galls; six pints of this water were exhaled by a mild heat, the operation being performed in not less than the space of forty-eight hours; it yielded, of a dark brown ochreous powder, seven grains, which, without calcination, was attracted by the magnet*; a strong evidence of its powerful impregnating principles. Yet this chalybeate is now neglected for the spas of Ballyspellan and Mallow; seldom considering the different natures of water, but consulting only Dame Fashion; indeed, those who drink waters should first consult an able physician as to their adaption to their ailments, it being frequently the case, that persons drink a vitriolic water, when, perhaps, a sulphureous or ferruginous spa, would be found more beneficial.

* Smith's History of Waterford, page 241.

We

We have been charmed with the wild notes of an harper, whom we met here on his way into the county of Cork. What a pity that some attention is not paid to this delightful but expiring science, so peculiar to this country; the number of bards throughout the kingdom is much reduced for want of proper encouragement, which reflects no small degree of disgrace upon the taste of the people; the celebrity which so honourably distinguished Ireland in the former ages, is, I think, a strong testimony of antient civilization; to so excellent a pitch, was the study of music elevated, that the Welch princes, in the tenth century, sent for various of our bards in order to correct their music and introduce our melodies, which to this day remain in Wales. Cardoc, a Welchman, who wrote in the twelfth century, assures us, that the Irish devised all the instruments, tunes, and measures, in use among the Welch. The learned Selden, likewise, speaking on the subject says, "Their musique,

musique, for the most part, came out of Ireland with Gruffydh ap Conan, Prince of North Wales, about King Stephen's time." Powell, another of their historians, allows the same; but above all, the authority of Cambrensis*, is a most flattering testimony. In 1792,

* "The attention of this people to musical instruments, I find worthy of commendation; in which their skill is beyond all comparison superior to any nation I have seen: for in these the modulation is not slow and solemn, as with instruments of Britain, to which we are accustomed; but the sounds are rapid and precipitate, yet, at the same time, sweet and pleasing. It is wonderful how in such precipitate rapidity of the fingers, the musical proportions are preserved; and by their art faultless throughout, in the midst of their complicated modulations and most intricate arrangement of notes, by a rapidity so sweet, a regularity so irregular, a concord so discordant, the melody is rendered harmonious and perfect; whether the chords of the diatesseron or diapente, are struck together, yet they always begin in a soft mood, and in the same, that all may be perfected in the sweetness of delicious sounds; they enter on, and again leave their modulations with so much subtilty, and the tinglings of the small

1792, the gentlemen of Belfast procured a meeting of the harpers, who were thinly scattered through the provinces, premiums were adjudged to the most meritorious, and a number of antient airs collected. However, I fear this patriotic effort has been frustrated by the unhappy alarms and discords, which since that period have unceasingly prevailed. Mounting our horses, we directed our course homeward, through a charming fertile country; on the hill of Slieu-na-maun, we stopped to admire the boundless scene of rich cultivation, which cannot fail to arrest the traveller's steps ere he descends: indeed it well deserves its name, "the Golden Vale," for such another tract is not easy to be met with. Arriving once more at Callan, we turned to the right, keeping the King's river on our left, and rode

small strings, sport with so much freedom under the deep notes of the bass, delight with so much delicacy, and sooth so softly, that the excellence of their art seems to lie in concealing it."

on

on for Thomastown, not wishing to return to town by the same rout that we left it, especially if there is any novelty worthy observation.

Thomastown is in the county of Kilkenny, and is a neat thriving place, pleasantly situated on the river Nore, which is navigable from hence to New Ross and Waterford, for small craft. The church stands on an eminence, overlooking the town, and was once a noble pile; the chancel is roofed, in which divine service is performed, but the nave is a crumbling ruin, threatening destruction to all who pass underneath its arches. A delightful walk of about a mile, along the banks of the river, brought us to the venerable ruins of of Jerpoint (or Jerripont). This abbey was founded by Donald, King of Ossory, anno 1180, for Cistertians, and dedicated to Saint Mary. The head of this abbey was a mitred abbot, and sat in parliament. Amongst the tombs, those of Donald the founder, and Felix

lix O'Dullany, bishop of Ossory, are most conspicuous, on the north side of the high altar. Bishop O'Dullany removed the episcopal see from Aghavoc, in Upper Ossory, to Kilkenny, and laid the foundation of the cathedral of St. Canice, about the latter end of the twelfth century; along with other benefactions, he endowed this abbey with the lands of Kell Rudi. It was surrendered to Henry VIII. anno 1539, who granted a pension to the abbot for his life.

If we consider the magnitude of this reverend structure, its numerous dependant buildings, which cover a great extent of ground, we shall not deem it improbable that 700 students lived within it walls, as tradition reports. A small stream runs on the west end, on the opposite side of which may be traced the foundations of walls, with some other buildings, and the corn-mill belonging to the abbey; the gardens probably extended along the rivulet, as numerous trees, some of them

them fruit, are scattered up and down. From this, there is an agreeable prospect of the house and grounds of Mr. Hunt; towards the right, the hill of Sheir-na-maun, and the rich borders of the county of Tipperary appear; while the left is bounded by the lofty mountains of the county of Waterford, forming a beautiful back ground to this fine ruin. Midway between Thomastown and Kilkenny, in Bennet's Bridge, an inconsiderable village, I observed near the river a small antient building, now a part of a mill; about half a mile beyond it are two of these moats, commonly called Danish forts, one on the road side to the right, the other on the left, a little distance from the pathway. These, as well as the towers, or steeples, have given rise to various speculations: they are attributed, by Sir Thomas Molyneux, to the Danes. He quotes Olaus Wormius, who describes many similar in Denmark, from whence Sir Thomas infers, that these, likewise, must be of Danish origin. As a proof,

proof, he says, these mounts or raths, are to be frequently seen throughout England, and are called Barrows, or Burrows, from the old Saxon word, Beorg, or Burg, (a hill*). He falsely

* The vulgar opinion of these raths is, that they were raised by the Danes; but the most intelligent Irish antiquarians ascribe them to the Firbolgs, or Farbologes, a people frequently mentioned in the antient MSS. whose name signifies a creeping man, or one who lives in a cave. They were antiently called Terrigenæ and Antricolæ, from their dwelling in caves; hence the Scythians (from whom the Irish are descended) were named by the Greeks, Getæ, and Geatæ; and of the antient Irish, this verse of Propertius takes notice:—

Ibernusq. Gates, Pictoq. Britania Curru.

Vide SMITH'S HISTORY OF CORK, p. 409.

Most of these raths have subterranean chambers, the entrance to which is commonly facing the east; the passage in some of them, after running spirally two or three turns, terminates in a central chamber; sometimes the entrance is straight.

In the year 1755, as some labourers were making a ditch at Aghabulloge, in the county of Cork, one of them dropped his

falsely deduces the origin of the narrow towers, or steeples, from the same people; for (says he) if the antient Irish were the authors of them, should we not find these towers in Scotland, which was early colonized by the Irish? This argument, however, will not support his assertion; for, if the absence of these towers from a country inhabited by the antient Irish, precludes them from being of Irish origin, how can he reconcile his Danish claim, when throughout all Denmark, no vestige of any thing similar is to be met with, nor in England either, where the Danes held a powerful

his spade into a deep hole, which obliged him to open the earth to get it out, where he found a passage into fifteen rooms, or vaults; in one of which, by estimation, were above five hundred skeletons; and in another five, all entire. The bones appeared of a pale reddish, or brick colour, some of them had been apparently burned; the chambers were above five feet high, many more were unexplored, being stopped up with immense flags. In one of the rooms was found a beautiful carved comb of wood, and its case, both of which, on being exposed to the air, mouldered into dust.

sway; (and if I mistake not) there are the remains of two in Scotland?

Mr. Llhwyd gives a description of a rath near Drogheda, on which a gold coin of the Emperor Valentinian was found, and which he decidedly thinks of Irish original. In the subterranean chamber was found one of those immense heads of the elk, so frequently dug up in bogs.

We arrived in town yesterday evening, much fatigued, but highly pleased with an excursion, which has not only communicated infinite amusement, but also some share of useful knowledge, with regard to the local parts of this province. I shall eagerly hasten to meet you, when I shall have the pleasure of telling you personally, how much

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your's, &c.

G. HOLMES.

FINIS.

J. D. DEWICK, Printer,
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Reference to the distance between the principal towns mentioned in the Tour.

	miles	furl.		miles	furl.
Kilkenny to Kells	6	4	Castle-Island	12	5
Callan	4	4	Killarny	9	7
Cashel	18	6	Cork	38	4
Holy Cross	7	2	Cove	6	0
Silvermines	10	0	From Cork to Rath-		
Killaloe	8	2	cormuck	13	1
Limerick	9	7	Lismore	10	0
Adare	9	0	Clonmel	11	4
Askeyton	8	3	Callan	16	4
Terbert	14	3	Thomastown	10	2
Listowel	19	4	Kilkenny	8	0

Miles 252 6.

The Author being at a distance when this work went to press, several errors have escaped; the most considerable of which are noticed in the following

ERRATA.

Page 1, line 6, *for* pursuits, *read* pursuit. p. 2, l. 17, *for* call, *read* cull. p. 6, l. 6, *for* Romances, *read* Romancers. p. 17, l. 11, *for* in many, *read* us many. p. 33, dele Armstrong, last line of note. p. 46, l. 8, *for* north tract, *read* noble tract. p. 51, l. 21, *for* by the side, &c. *read* side, &c. p. 58, l. 10, *for* sect, *read* sept. p. 79, l. 12, *for* simple, *read* ample. p. 80, l. 4, *for* duo, *read* dim. p. 91, l. 1, *for* by the side, &c. *read* side, &c. p. 97, l. 20, *for* round, *read* ruined. p. 101, l. 21, *for* femiginous, *read* ferruginous. p. 117, l. 23, *for* imperious, *read* impervious. p. 125, l. 4, *for* Cronyers, *read* Cronyns. p. 128, l. 9, *for* four *read* the. p. 139, l. 1, *for* tower, *read* town. p. 180, l. 15, *for* Lestmeath, *read* Westmeath. p. 189, l. 7, *for* Rawley, *read* Rawleigh. p. 196, l. 4, *for* Aghavoc, *read* Aghavoe. p. 200, l. 8, *for* north, *read* noble. p. 207, l. 4, *for* Shierna-maun, *read* Slieu-oa-maun. p. 207, l. 9, *for* in Bennet's Bridge, *read* is Bennet's Bridge.

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